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A NEW PAOLO AND FRANCESCA

A NOVEL

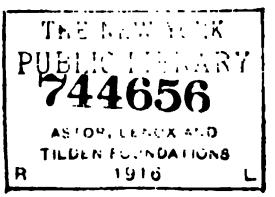
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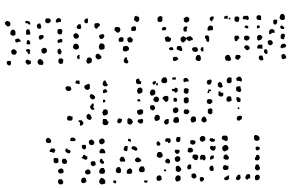
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To

LILY BRAGGIOTTI

In Remembrance, April 18, 1903

A New Paolo and Francesca

CHAPTER I

WITH a rush of triumphant wings the wind swept down the avenue of cypresses, out into the open green spaces of vineyard and oliveyard, up into the sunny blue spaces of the Tuscan sky. The clouds scudded like ships before it. Soon, where the white sails had spread, was a void in which one heard the silence of unseen, irresistible forces.

Janice flew along the avenue before the wind, her hair afloat, her eyes wide with sun. The folds of her gown drifted about her dancing limbs, while she sheltered a bunch of anemones against her bosom. But still her flight scattered the petals so that they wove the gold of her hair and the floating white of her garments into the illusion of plumed wings.

She pulled up, breathless, under the great iron gates of the villa. "What's the use of wings if one is the prisoner of locks?" she pouted, and her tone was gay. "I see I can fly; I wonder can I climb?" She tilted her head and measured the

bars between herself and the road. "No," she decided; "but there must be some way out."

She studied the gate till the pattern of the ironwork forced itself on her notice.

"Now what does that design mean? Of course it means something, — torches interlaced, a trellis of flame. Whose symbol is the torch?" Her teeth set a bar of pearl on the red underlip. "Eros? Hymen? No, not those. Love is liberty, and the gate is a barrier. That 's not the key to the riddle, and not the key to the gate either. I must get into the road somehow — stupid to be a prisoner in my own garden."

Her eyes darted to the right and to the left of the gate, but the close hedge of laurels offered no outlet. And beyond was the road gleaming in the sun.

It had been swept by the wind into an ivory path that led away and away between the olives, over the plain, to the distance, where the dome of Florence struck sharp against the blue.

But the dim grey city girt round by the dim grey hills — blurred and blotted to-day by a delicate veil of wind-tossed olives — made no appeal to her fancy. She could think only of her flight that was bounded by the torches interlaced and the iron flames of the gateway.

If it had not been for the gate she might have flown on along the road, and not paused till she reached the city of belfry and cupola. She flung out her hand impatiently, and the anemones fell to

the ground. What matter? Outside there in the fields the ground was mosaiced in anemones, purple and white and crimson. And more than anemones; for, defiant of winds, the tulips lifted to the sun wide chalices, scarlet and gold. Janice set her lips in an obstinate line. She would pass the gate, and not by the prosaic way of returning to the lodge for a key.

The sun glinted on the curved knife with which the peasant had been trimming the bushes.

Janice pounced upon it and slashed and hacked at the hedge. Soon she had made space to pass, and, heedless of torn skirts, she crashed through and gained the road.

But her energy had spent itself. Being there, she had no wish for a flight. Even the sense of overcoming obstacles brought no triumph with it. Her heart tightened as she saw the trees she had scarred, the boughs she had rent; yet she threw her head high.

"What I have done I have done," she said proudly, and glanced about her, certain of justifying her liberty. "Ah! the anemones — the beauties!"

In a moment she had leaped down into the sunk fields bordering the road, and was plucking handfuls of blossoms and tossing them into her skirt. Little happy laughs sounded as she flitted about gathering recklessly.

"This is worth any ruin of branches!"

"Janice! trespassing again?"

The grave voice recalled her. She lifted a merry, pouting face.

"Ah, Heriot! And who would n't trespass for such treasure?"

"You have no morals," Heriot smiled reluctantly. "Your own *poderi* are full of flowers, but you only want those you ought not to have."

Janice clambered up the bank and stood beside the girl on the road.

"I had to do something wicked, Heriot. I was too happy to think of being good."

"To be good is to be happy," said Heriot soberly.

"To be good is to be dull," Janice mocked; "and dulness offers a sarcophagus to life. Sit down, oh most moral! I 'll shame your platitudes with poetry. There! and there! and there!"

With a swift movement she tossed up her lapful of flowers, and a purple shower whirled and fell about her friend.

"The god rained in gold on Danaë, but Heriot I baptise with purple passion."

Heriot twisted round, caught her, and shook her.

"You florid creature! Janice, when will you be serious?"

"Never on a day of wind and sun. How can I be serious with the stir in my blood? I feel the wind sweeping along every nerve in me and making it sing. Ah! if you were like me, instead of being a stodgy Englishwoman, you 'd understand me."

Heriot lifted her brows. "And since when have you ceased to be an Englishwoman?"

"Since I have drunk Italy, since I have tasted the south. And to think that all this is to go to make a British matron! Look at me — can you see me the mother of respectable daughters?"

Heriot, gazing at the comical twist of her mouth, at the strange trouble in the deep eyes, tried to answer lightly.

"Janice of the laugh and the sad eyes, your daughters should touch the ideal."

"My daughters would bore me horribly. Bah! how I shall hate growing old and staid and sober!" She danced a few steps along the road, then swung back. "I 'd like to be an Italian peasant girl with a merry brown baby, idling all day among the olives, or singing among the vines, and never a care in the world."

"Goose!" Heriot smiled fondly. "To be a woman is to have all the care in the world."

"Then I 'll not be a woman at all. I 'll be a seagull, bird of the wind. You should have seen me flying down the avenue just now, splendidly rushing, as if on wings. Only the gate stopped me."

"How did you get out? I forgot to leave the key."

"I flew over," said Janice gaily. "The gate was barred with torches flaming 'I forbid you.' Do you think I minded? Torch and flame could not imprison me. I flew over."

"That is why your hair is all down. You 'll never grow up, baby."

"I 'll have to," she said ruefully. "In the air there 's a sound of marrying and giving in marriage."

A quick shadow darkened Heriot's face. "Oh, Janice, not the Marchese?"

"I should hope not — the curled and perfumed perfection. It 's Blackie who has grown so important on the subject of marriage. Yesterday she hinted that this unexpected journey of Dad's was really a search for a son-in-law; — as if I wanted a husband, when the yacht is waiting at Genoa and the sea is beckoning me!" She threw out her arms and swung slowly backward and forward with a fine rhythmic motion. "Oh, the sea, and the sea!" she crooned; "and the wind, and the wind! I want no lover but the sea; no kisses but the wind's. I 'd love to drift all day in the waves, with seaweed twined in my hair."

"Venus Aphrodite!" Heriot laughed. "No, there 's nothing so poetic before you, poor Janice. You 'll share the common lot of fair women."

"And you, who are fairest among fair women? Yes, we are a very picturesque pair, so don't frown. You, — strong, dark, splendid, silent, — a mountain pool reflecting high peaks; I, — the brook wantoning down to the sea. You, — the night, — a night with stars. What eyes you have, Heriot! I, — the morning, bathed in April; but

without April's tears, in spite of my eyes." She reflected a moment. "My eyes are the eyes of Mona Lisa; they prophesy doom," she added with a sudden change of tone.

"Your doom is love, if love is doom," said Heriot.

Janice flung back her head. "Doom is our hold of circumstance, and not even love can hold circumstance. Love! — it is as full of contradiction and as irrational as I am!" She shivered and caught Heriot's arm. "Heriot, what does it mean? Why is it that even when I 'm wild with happiness you say my eyes are sad?"

Heriot shook her head. "Who can say? But the contradiction is charming. It makes you adorable, Janice."

Janice's mouth was as sad as her eyes. Her mood had changed, and she drooped as she walked.

"Let us go in," she said wearily. "You have the key, so you can open the gate."

The tossing of the olives set a dainty tracery beyond the lines of cypress. Faint perfume came down the wind from the terrace where the garlands of pink roses showered about the marble Loves and Fauns and Daphnes that had seen Janice pass from child to woman. Above the terrace the long, low walls of the white villa stretched, bathed in sun; and above them stone-pine and ilex struck deep notes in the sunlit harmony of the grey hillside.

As the wind burst through the open gate the girls

fell back. They paused inside the gate, Heriot silent under the stormy silence of her friend.

Janice had moods to match cloud and sun, night and dawn, hail or snow, fire or frost; and Heriot knew and loved and was patient of them all. She stood unmoved among them as the old villa stood unmoved among the rioting winds.

All at once Janice faced her with lifted finger, the light flashing over her face again: —

"Listen, Heriot! a sound of singing —"

The soft wild music of an Italian *canzonetta* set a thin girdle of song about the wind. A procession of peasants was coming down the avenue, the colours of their dresses lighting the dusky cypresses.

Janice clapped her hands. "It's Giustina! She's being married to-day. We'll wait and see her pass. Ah, if I had not thrown away all my anemones!"

She looked eagerly round her. There was no time to gather flowers, but the laurel branches she had cut were green on the ground. She filled her arms with them and stood, her face framed in green boughs, a dainty delight on her face, waiting for the wedding party.

The pretty dark-eyed bride, all smiles under the roses in her hat, walked between her father and her bridegroom. Her four bridesmaids in white and green followed with a troop of young peasants, and sang as they came. When they saw Janice and Heriot they stopped singing, and came on, shyly smiling.

Janice nodded and smiled to them and strewed the laurel boughs across the road.

"It 's love's triumph," she said softly, and was pleased to see Giustina step delicately so as not to crush the leaves.

She darted forward and kissed the girl on both cheeks. "Good luck, Giustina! I know that you and Beppe will be happy."

"*La signorina è troppo buona, troppo gentile,*" Giustina murmured, and passed on pinker than her roses. Janice watched their sedate going, a charming sympathy thrilling her.

"What a day for a wedding!" she cried, throwing up her arms. "How the wind speeds the lovers! I 'm glad they had the laurels."

"But you stopped their singing," said Heriot prosaically.

Janice meditated a moment, then nodded gravely. "Yes, that was right. Love should be set to the music of the wind. It is too high for voices, it needs the fine pitch of the storm."

"All very well," Heriot laughed, "but I 'd choose love set to the sun, not to the storm. What are you staring at so, Janice? That is only Blackie on the terrace."

"Is it?" Janice said dreamily. She passed her hand over her eyes and turned a troubled face to Heriot. "Curious. One seems to have flashes into the future one can't explain. I thought it was Fate on the terrace. She was weaving your life and

mine together, and the web was full of tangles. Imagine tangles when it is your life with mine that makes its happiness! I wonder what I should do if you ever left me."

Heriot lifted her quiet eyes. "You 'll never lose me, sweet. You will always be first in my love. I 've never had anyone but you."

"And I have only Daddy and you — and Blackie, if her incoherency counts."

"Her incoherency has cohered for twenty years," Heriot smiled. "She has really been a mother to us both. And you have your cousins."

"But I 've never seen them. They were nothing to us till our poor boy died. Now Logan Catesby is Dad's heir, and will have the title. I hope he 'll grow old waiting for it." She moved away petulantly, then turned again. "I wish Dad had n't gone away. He never went away alone before."

"Perhaps there 's a letter from him. I see Blackie waving."

Janice glanced up at the terrace where a stout lady was signalling to them. "If she can do anything so apposite as to signal, something extraordinary must have happened!" she cried.

Then she dashed forward, and two minutes after was rushing up the steps. Heriot saw her flash past the Loves and Fauns and Daphnes on the terrace wall.

"A letter from Dad, Blackie?" Janice gasped. "The dear boy! Give it me this minute."

Then she saw Miss Black's face, and all the colour left hers.

"Is he dead?" she whispered, shrinking back.

"No, Janice, no, my dear!" Miss Black sobbed. "It's stupid of me to frighten you so. But I'm naturally upset. It's all so unexpected, though we've been expecting it so long. Your dear father is well. No one is dead. At least some one is dead. It's a joyful event, and that's why I'm crying. Sir Logan writes in the best of spirits, and that's why it upsets me to think of it."

Janice propped herself against a Daphne and looked in despair at the lady.

"Blackie, if you're not more precise I'll fling your body after your wits."

"Ah, my dear, how pleasant that would be. Where the mind is there would the body be also. My mind is in the grave where my dear Peregrine has just laid his beloved mother."

"*Will* you explain what has happened?" Janice seized the poor lady and held her with a will.

"My dearest child, have I not explained? It's all so old and so new. When you have waited twenty years for a husband the end of waiting has something of novelty in it."

Janice dropped her arms. "Are you going to marry Dad?" she asked, a horrible quiet in her voice.

"Janice! What an imagination you have, — it is almost indecent. Sir Logan? No, my dear;

some one quite different. This is the man I 'm about to marry."

With a proud flourish Miss Black opened the huge jet locket that lay like a cairn on the mountain of her person, and held it out to Janice.

"About to marry!" the girl echoed, and leaned forward to look.

"He seems pleasant — and fair — and — and young," she gasped. Then she broke into wild laughter, peal upon peal echoing among the Loves and Fauns and Daphnes under the pink roses.

How could she not laugh when she thought of Miss Black — stout, moustached, fifty-five — marrying the long-necked spectacled youth that the locket enshrined?

"I 'm laughing because I shall be so miserable if you do marry," she stammered, as soon as she could control her voice.

"I know, my dear, I know. It is the fly in the ointment of my happiness. But I 'll not leave you, dear child — not till Sir Logan returns. Dear Peregrine must wait for his happiness patiently, as indeed he can now that his dear mother is dead. I 'll tell him he must not have too many good things at once."

"Peregrine? Is his name Peregrine?" Janice asked, trying not to laugh again as she saw the expression on Miss Black's face.

"Yes, dear child. Peregrine Brown, Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Leipsic."

"Physic and Gastronomy! — at his age?" Janice cried.

"He is sixty," said Miss Black equably. "The portrait was taken some little time ago — when we were first engaged. It is a speaking likeness."

"Heriot" — Janice turned to Heriot, who had just reached them — "Blackie is going to be married. We shall be dreadfully dull without anyone to laugh at."

"Really, Blackie dear?" Heriot's fine face lighted up beautifully. "I 'm so glad." She stooped and kissed her.

"Yes, my dear, yes," said Miss Black, fumbling for her handkerchief. "I 'm glad too — that 's why I cry. But marriage is a risk. It should not be entered upon lightly — not till you are absolutely certain that nothing better offers. I counsel you two sweet girls to take time — to take time even if Sir Logan should counsel otherwise. I have had a letter from him, Janice; he has met your cousin. From what he says in his praise I fear he is thinking of him as a son-in-law. Janice, my poor child, love is before you."

The tragic tones of the last sentence delighted Janice. She danced down the terrace and back again. Then she tore the petals from a cluster of roses and tossed them over the terrace and watched them whirl in the wind.

"I dedicate love to the storm!" she cried.

CHAPTER II

"DADDY, we've wasted the whole summer," Janice complained. "I never spent a summer empty of the sea before. This is September, and the Seagull has been waiting at Genoa since April. Daddy, how could you stay away from your girl so long?"

Sir Logan shaded his eyes that she might not see the pain in them. Must he tell her of the dread that had shadowed the long bright summer? She had no suspicion that he had spent the months going from doctor to doctor, from cure to cure, and all in vain. Must he tell her?

"Do you remember your brother, child?"

"Daddy! How could I ever forget our poor boy?"

"No, of course you could not. Janice, I have seen a man that is worthy to take his place in your heart and mine."

The solemnity of his manner only tickled Janice. Her face puckered into lines of fun and mischief.

"I knew it!" she cried. "Blackie was right. Dear boy, you have been finding a husband for me!"

"Have I?" he said sadly. "I wish I knew that I had found him."

"Come! Explain him! Expound him! Tall or short? Gay or grave? Sixteen or sixty? I promise to crown your search with a wedding-ring — for Heriot!"

She danced down the terrace singing a snatch of song: —

> "Tell me where is fancy bred,
> Or in the heart or in the head?"

Then she came slowly, wearily back, in one of her violent transitions from gay to grave.

"Tell me about him, Daddy," she said very seriously.

She folded her hands across her bosom and waited. Sir Logan looked at the beautiful, wilful girl, studying her face with a wistful fondness. Her mouth was now as sad as her eyes. The shadow of the future had fallen on her.

His glance strayed beyond her to the marble statue by which she stood. It was a grotesque thing, a faun with two faces: the face looking south was the face of an angel; the face looking north was twisted and malicious, the face of a devil. And beside it was the face of his child, holding what promise of sun, what possibility of storm.

"Janice of the laugh and the sad eyes. Poor child! I ought to remember you have had no mother."

"I've had Heriot!" she cried sharply. "All my life I've had Heriot; she has been everything to me."

"Ah yes," he sighed; "you will have Heriot. Miss Black unfortunately will not be here. You can't go very far wrong while you have Heriot."

"Daddy, what is it? What is it?" Janice cried, dismayed.

Sir Logan shook off his gravity. "I was to tell you of my paragon," he said lightly.

"That is not it," she said. "What makes you look so sad? What makes you afraid for me? What dreadful thing is to happen to me?"

He walked up and down the terrace to gain time, passing the Loves, the Fauns, the Daphnes that kept watch over the valley.

"Life is the faun with two faces," he said abruptly at last; "on one side the face of a devil, on the other the face of an angel. On which face, I wonder, will you look?"

"On both in turns," Janice cried gaily, throwing her fears to the winds. She caught his hand and pressed it to her cheek. "I was afraid some horrid skeleton had hopped out of the cupboard, and it is only the old question of my moralities. Heriot says I have none, so we need n't discuss them. Bah! you really frightened me, you solemn, dear boy! Now the moralities are dismissed, summon the paragon. It 's Logan Catesby of course."

"I would have been proud to have had him for

my son," Sir Logan answered gravely. "Can I say more? — a true, just man, honourable, tender."

"All the will-wear-well virtues!" Janice mocked. "Has n't he one little sparkling vice to decorate his homespun?"

"Homespun, child? He 's one of the finest looking men I ever saw, and one of the finest — Janice, I would meet death cheerfully if I knew I had left my girl to him; if your son bore my name, — if I felt that the old line would still live, it would be some consolation for the loss of my boy."

"Don't!" said Janice, holding herself proudly. "Am I to be bought and sold like a brood mare?"

Then the flash in her eyes was quenched by the look on Sir Logan's face. "Daddy, what is it?" she cried shrilly, throwing herself into the arms he held out. He drew her close, holding her head so that she could not gaze up at him with those eyes dedicated to grief.

"I am to have an operation, Janice. I may not live through it." He felt her warm young body turn to marble, but she did not speak. By and by a trembling took her.

"Tell me everything," she whispered.

"All these months I 've been trying to cure an internal trouble. Logan has been with me. We hoped to save this — but no use. My life may end suddenly, at any moment. An operation may give me a few years more with you; it 's my only chance. Colzi will do it — very soon now."

"They will let me be with you?"

She loosened herself from him and stood alone. Her eyes were steady, but her blanched lips still trembled. Her face was old.

"They will let me be with you?" she said again, insistently.

"Afterwards. I think I might like to go to the sea. You would enjoy that?"

"Anything! anything!" she cried passionately, "so long as I had you."

"Ah, that is it, my darling. And if you had n't me — It would take the sting from death if I left you in safe hands."

"You mean my cousin Logan's?" Her voice had frozen.

"I mean Logan's. In any case he is your guardian. I've arranged all business matters with him. You will not be rich, Janice. The estates pass to him. Only the villa and the yacht are yours. He is the man I would choose for my girl if I had the whole world to choose from. I have talked with him. If you promise to marry him —"

He broke off, and his silence was a prayer. Janice gazed at him till the entreaty in his eyes pierced through her pride and her misery and found the spring of her love. "It would take the sting from death," she said hoarsely.

"Ah, my child!" Sir Logan groaned. He turned away, and she could not find any words to

curb the wild tumult of her thoughts. Then her mind rebounded in a reckless abandon.

"What is it to me whom I marry so long as it helps Daddy?"

"I promise," she said aloud. "I promise — But — oh, my father! my father! It is n't true! It can't be! You don't even look ill." She put her hands on his shoulders. Her eyes tore at the secret behind his quiet.

He shook his head smiling. "Child, we must all face death. To-day or to-morrow, what does it profit which day? There are things to say. No woman could help loving Logan. You may trust him utterly in everything. He knows my great hope. I have watched his career since my boy died. I once thought to marry his mother, Lady Elizabeth. She married my cousin instead and went to India. But I could never forget, — nor she, — and we chose not to meet. Her husband is dead and she is back at Scaurlets. It is all my happiness that she will be there to be a mother to my girl. If things go right I will take you to her. If not — you must start with Miss Black and Heriot — "

Janice had listened, making no sign or sound. Now she spoke in a voice so thin Sir Logan could scarcely hear it.

"You have not told me all. You say things so finally, as if — "

"It may be final, child. One never knows. You

have taken my greatest dread from me; the future has no fear."

"And Heriot? You don't think of Heriot?"

"She has her own fortune, and I have no fear for Heriot."

"And why for me?"

"Child, there is the Marchese Malvolino."

"You need not be afraid," said Janice, lifting her head high.

Her father looked searchingly at her, and she bore his gaze without flinching.

"You have taken that fear away, Janice. Thank you, my darling." He kissed her, and Janice turned and went slowly from him, a cold, still figure among the marble figures on the terrace.

At the end of the terrace she paused and looked down into the vineyard below, seeing, without seeing, the laden vines, the peasants busy with the vintage, the patient white oxen, the carts piled with purple grapes. She heard, without hearing, the hum of voices, Giustina and Beppe singing as they worked. Death could not strike its silence where life gathered its harvest, where love's harvest was ripening. How could death smite that happy hillside?

Suddenly she flew back to her father.

"Rubbish! rubbish!" she cried, the words tumbling over each other in her joyful haste. "You can't die! There is no death! You can't die! I see what has happened. There is a slight operation, and the surgeon exaggerates risks. All goes right,

of course, and then — ecco! what a skilful surgeon I am! *You* die? I refuse to be frightened by such patent tricks! The sun is on the garden, and the sunflowers are flaming. No one ever dies in Italy. There are purple grapes on the vines, and the olives are blackening. Life! life! and more life! There is no death!"

She caught Sir Logan's hand and dragged him to the edge of the terrace. The blood had rushed to her face; she was alive again. "See this wonderful sunset!" she cried. "And listen! there's the bell from Giotto's tower. Isn't it like a great flower blossoming from the silence?"

Sir Logan stood bared in the flood of amber light. Across the valley came the deep note of the bell ringing the Angelus.

CHAPTER III

STANDING on the terrace, Janice and Heriot watched the funeral procession passing down the avenue, — a long line of white-clad figures carrying torches.

The lights on the night gave a more vivid effect of music than the monotonous chanting of the priests. There were no stars but the torches already paling in the distance. There were no stars for Janice but the light of a noble life suddenly quenched.

Fainter and fainter came the drone of the priests' voices till the low moan of the wind sounded above the chanting.

The air shook itself free of the heavy incense, the breath of the piled garlands. Under the garlands where the incense wreaths were curling Sir Logan lay, smiling because he had not seen death. On the morning after his talk with Janice they had found him dreaming of eternity, and not even the girl's entreaties had wakened him.

Her tears were dry now. Still and cold, she gazed out on the night that was dark about the passing of her youth.

Fainter and fainter came the sound of the chanting; paler and paler grew the lights. The long lines

of the Brothers of the Misericordia foreshortened. They had reached the end of the avenue.

The great gates opened and closed again, and night held only darkness and the low moan of the wind.

Janice fell on her knees and laid her head on the marble parapet. Heriot, colder and stiller than her friend, passed into the house and left her.

"I am glad! I am glad!" Janice was saying over and over again to herself, and the words wove themselves into the moan of the wind till they sounded like a dirge.

She knew now that the operation would not have saved him. How beautiful it had been, — the quiet face, the wonderful smile that had welcomed death!

She thought of his words. "Life is the faun with two faces." He had always looked on the face of the angel, and had found that death, too, had the face of an angel. Now, with the lights about him, he had gone forth to conquer the eternal night.

She was praying now, praying that she might always look on the face of the angel. He had been afraid for her. She would live so that her life might cast out that old fear.

It would be easy to live a good life in the villa where the rooms would be full of his voice, where the echoes of his teaching would be still about her.

"Be not unwilling, selfish, unadvised, or passionate in anything you do. Let your choice run all one way, and be bold and resolute for that which

is best. Think nothing for your interest which makes you break your word, quit your modesty, hate, suspect, or curse any person, or inclines you to any practice that will not bear the light and look the world in the face. For without a regard for things divine, you will fail in your behaviour towards men. Come to your own aid while yet you may."

She could hear him still. "Come to your own aid while yet you may" was carved on the beam that crossed the ceiling in her bedroom.

"I can hear him speaking," she said aloud, lifting her head. But the sound in her ears was the sound of the wind among the cypresses, and far away and very faint there was a murmur of priests chanting.

What had been his last word to her? They had stood together on the terrace watching the sunset. Ah yes, she knew; and the knowledge chilled her like the touch of a dead hand. But she sprang to her feet and threw out her hand in passionate justification of her promise.

"What I have done I have done!" she cried. "It took away the sting from death. Ah! it is little to have given one word to make his death happy."

She stood there, a slim black figure among the Loves and Fauns and Daphnes of the terrace. And the night gathered thick about her, and the low wind in the cypresses sounded mournfully.

Out of the night rose up the spectre of the future, but her heart was strong to face it.

"I am not afraid of you," she said, slowly weighing her words. "Ah yes, I see you have strange looks and your eyes threaten. There is a scourge in your hand, and you offer me sackcloth to wear. I am ready. I can bare my back for the scourge; I can go proudly in sackcloth. Death had no sting for him —" Her voice faltered, her limbs shook. Suddenly terror seized her, and she sank down on her knees with a great cry, — "The sting of life! The sting of life!"

CHAPTER IV

"NO, Janice," Miss Black said decisively; "my dear Peregrine and I have waited so long it would not be natural for us not to wait longer. My marriage is a dull certainty, while yours is sparkling with the most brilliant uncertainty. My one desire is to see you safe in your husband's hands. I have no curiosity whatever about my husband. I confess to a great deal about yours."

"My husband?" Janice cried, startled. "Blackie, what are you thinking of?"

"My dear Janice, if you marry your cousin he will probably be your husband. Your dear father spoke to me of your promise; it was natural and right."

"But — my husband—" Janice repeated vaguely.

Heriot came forward and put her arms round her.

"Dearest, your promise does n't bind you. If, when you meet — "

Janice drew herself away and turned from one to the other with troubled eyes.

"I promised — but — I did n't think — my husband?"

"To be sure, to be sure," said Miss Black serenely. "Lady Elizabeth takes it all for granted.

She is very anxious that there should be no more delay in your meeting. I suggest that you marry Sir Logan (as I suppose one must call him) as soon as you are at Scaurlets. Believe me, dear child, time and proximity will remove the glamour from the dearest of relationships. Don't wait till your illusions about your fiancé die a natural death; marry while there is still romance to justify the recklessness. Your beloved father begged me to take you to Lady Elizabeth Catesby if anything happened to him. Well, it is a month since something happened to him, and we are still as he left us. If poor dear Sir Logan knows anything, he must know that I've been faithless to his last wishes."

"I have not been faithless to his wishes," said Janice, turning very pale. "But I must think. Give me time to think. This year, or next year; does it matter to anyone but me? Blackie, you must marry your professor. Bring him here to live. This is your home, and we want you to stay with us."

"My dear, Peregrine can come here when we are married; it will be an excellent thing. In this beautiful villa it will be easy to escape from the monotony of marriage. But my wedding must wait on yours. I don't accept new responsibilities till I've shaken off old ones. Dear me, if I married now I should have nothing to look forward to for the rest of my life — and that would indeed be dull. Lady Elizabeth is urgent that I should take you to Scaurlets. The yacht is ready and it would

be most unseemly for you and Heriot to sail without a chaperon. I know I shall suffer from that hateful sea, but I shall be sustained by curiosity and a little — a very little cognac. Women can sustain most adversities by the help of cognac and curiosity."

Janice walked restlessly about the room.

"I am not going to Scaurlets yet," she said obstinately. "There is no reason why I should not stay in the villa till the end of the year."

"My dear, the reason may be knocking at the door now," said Miss Black. "Oh no, it's only Giovanni."

The heavy portière parted. Giovanni announced a visitor, the Marchese Malvolino.

Janice turned sharply. "Tell the Marchese I do not receive." Giovanni spread out his hands deprecatingly.

"Signorina, I have said it, but what would you? This devil of a Marchese is deaf."

The girl made a quick step forward, then stopped.

The portière had parted again, and the Marchese was bowing himself into the room.

She waited for him, a sickening helplessness magnetising her, the perfume he brought with him seeming to numb her senses.

He was a man about fifty, faultlessly dressed in mourning, precise to the point of his ebony cane. His handsome face looked more wicked than ever under its bland solicitude. Suddenly the girl's figure stiffened.

"Tell the Marchese I do not receive," she said again, turned with her head in the air, and walked to the window.

"Tell the Signorina one day she will receive me," said the Marchese, bowing. He bowed to Miss Black and Heriot, bowed again, and passed bowing behind the portière.

Miss Black and Heriot exchanged glances of troubled significance. Then Janice swung round from the window.

"Blackie, do what you like; arrange what you like; start to-morrow if you like. Only let us get away to the sea. Let us get away to the clean air."

She stood, tall and scornful, her head thrown back, her nostrils wide and quivering. The wildness of her eyes gave her the look of an animal at bay.

CHAPTER V.

THE Seagull sped onward from the grey warm waters of the Mediterranean towards the grey cold waters of the bay.

The day was still, and the white wreaths from the funnel of the yacht spread into rings, grew faint, and vanished in the October mists that swathed the sky. Janice and Heriot paced up and down the deck, their heavy mourning silencing the songs of the seamen. The flag drooped at half-mast and reminded them that Sir Logan had made his last voyage.

"Heriot, I never knew the Seagull to go so fast before. They 've certainly put on steam. Look at the waves, how they race past. And I always thought her a slow boat." Janice paused in her walk and turned a frowning face to her friend.

"We are steaming rather slowly, really," Heriot answered. "At this rate we can't get to Marseilles before to-morrow."

"She ought not to have been a steam yacht," Janice went on petulantly. "If she had been anything else we might have put off that wretched landing at Marseilles for days."

She walked restlessly to the bow, where she stood staring out. Not a sail was in sight. Overhead was

a grey, monotonous sky; before, behind, around her was grey, monotonous sea. The swish of waves on the side of the boat mingled with the beat of the screw. There was no other sound in all the wide waste of waters.

Janice shivered. That horrible thud! thud! was like the beating of a heart. In the wash of the waves she heard the sound of tears. She did not understand herself. The courage with which she had faced her promise to marry her cousin was gone. The promise was a rack on which she was being torn.

She did not blame her father, whose love for her had set her on the rack; but she longed with all the violence of her young, passionate soul that she might break her vow without disloyalty to the dead.

If only she had been free to live her life in her sunny Italian home till love sought her, or death found her! If only the Marchese — What had her father feared for her? What had she feared for herself that she had fled from the villa to the safety that Scaurlets offered — even though Logan Catesby was waiting there to claim her promise? She knew what she feared.

"Heriot," she said suddenly, "do I look like a woman whose passion will sweep her off her feet, who will sacrifice everything to her emotions?"

Heriot did not answer at once. Her grave eyes searched Janice's face. She saw passion written there, and pride, and scorn of control. She remem-

bered the pretty, self-willed child who had never been thwarted; she thought of the lovely, high-willed girl whose whims had been law to them all. She saw the woman struggling between faithlessness to her dead and faithfulness to herself. She thought of her large generous nature and her restless impulses, and she was afraid for her. Janice's lovers had never touched her real self. When love woke in her, the best — or the worst — would wake too.

"Sir Logan was right, Janice; you will be safer in a good man's care."

"Is safety a better thing than liberty?" Janice asked, frowning. "But Logan — the good man — may not care for me. There is always that hope."

"A broken reed to lean on, Janice. What man could help loving you? And apart from that, it is natural that your father's heir should marry you."

"Why should n't he love you, Heriot? You are more beautiful than I am."

"I am not the witch that you are, sweet. Think of it, twenty-five, and I 've never had a lover! You are eighteen, and you can't tell the number of your victims."

"It must be my hair," Janice said whimsically. "It is longer than yours, my only advantage over you. Shall I cut it off, Heriot? Shall Samson be shorn of his strength?"

"Idiot!" Heriot smiled. "Keep your love snare. Who knows? Perhaps one man in the world will escape the toils."

Janice laughed a lonely little laugh that rang forlornly.

"If only Logan were that man! If only he would care for you instead of me, Heriot! If only I had let him come to the villa! It is terrible to think that to-morrow I shall see him. Ah! how I hope that he will hate the sight of me!"

"'Hope thou not much, and fear thou not at all,'" Heriot quoted.

Janice turned again to the sea and stood staring out with wide, miserable eyes. Her hope was only a tattered little shred that would not bear the strain of Logan Catesby's loyalty to the wishes of his dead friend.

He had already assumed a right of guardianship over her, and only her command had prevented him from going to her at the villa. But he had asked no permission to meet the yacht at Marseilles and take his cousin overland to Scaurlets. Simply he had written that he should be there.

And to-morrow the Seagull would be at Marseilles, and Janice would know if her promise meant life or death to her.

That night the waves rose and the winds blew and the little Seagull laboured in the storm. Janice came on deck, feeling in herself the raging of a storm as pitiless. Her will was tossed, now high, now low. She rose to the heights of self-devotion; she sank to the depths of listless surrender. Her life tore in her and shrieked against the bonds in

which she had bound it; but the storm only hustled her on to meet decision. Darkness was round her and tumult, and she felt the force of laws in herself against which there was no appeal.

When dawn showed her the thin coastline with its gleam of white houses, she was too tired to beat against the force driving her to doom.

She was on deck again when the yacht dropped anchor.

Heriot, hurrying up from her hasty dressing, exclaimed at her white face, her white gown.

Janice smiled gallantly. "I am trying to make a feast-day of it, Heriot. I could not go to keep my promise to daddy as if I did it sorrowfully, so to-day I am in white."

"Darling! darling!" Heriot cried despairingly. "You are not bound. If when you meet you feel that you can't love him, you are absolved from your promise."

"When we meet I shall know if I can love him," Janice said firmly; "but I shall not be absolved from my promise. I shall know soon now. How rough it is! Poor Blackie is in her berth, too miserable to move. Did the storm keep you awake?"

"I could n't sleep. The wind in the rigging sounded like your voice crying."

"I was n't crying. I stayed on deck all night. The storm went to my brain. I would have been glad if the wind had swept me away." Suddenly her voice changed. "Those great waves are mag-

nificent; but it 's not safe to land. We 'll stay on board — that will give me one day more."

"Are you to play the coward now? No, Janice, we 'll not be the worse for a little tossing. Look! that boat yonder dances like a live thing on the waves. It is coming to the Seagull. Janice, do you think —?"

Janice peered out with steady eyes.

"I think it must be," she said quietly.

The boat was labouring to them through a heavy sea. It carried one passenger, — a tall man seated in the stern. Janice struggled to see his face.

Her heart quietened strangely as the boat came nearer; her face lost its look of strain. She gazed wonderingly at the handsome, eager face lifted to hers, at the frank, laughing eyes.

He stood up in the boat, easily balancing himself, lifted his cap, and smiled. "Seagull, ahoy! Have you Miss Catesby aboard?"

Janice turned to Heriot with a little broken laugh. "'Miss Catesby,' he said; not — not — 'Janice,' and not 'my fiancée.'"

"I will come up again later," Heriot said. "You will like to meet him alone."

Three minutes after he was on deck. Cap in hand, he came quickly towards Janice, a curious, eager light in his eyes.

"I am so glad I came — I feel that I rule the waves."

Janice laughed too. She was so glad — so glad.

Her feet could have danced as her heart was dancing within her.

"You are a good sailor? You love the sea, too?" she asked quickly, her face blossoming.

"Love it! I 'm happy only when I 'm on it."

"And I too," she sighed contentedly.

Ah! what had she feared? How had she not trusted her father's judgment? She read the man's face. Yes, he was true, just, honourable, tender, — all the virtues; and virtues so lighted up by his smile they seemed touched with morning.

The Seagull leaped, straining at her chains. Janice felt that her heart leaped too, but she did not strain at anchor. She had come through the storm into the haven where she would be.

He was gazing down at her. She looked up slowly and timidly, longing to know that she pleased him.

Then she looked away again in a rosy confusion and did not see that, equally shy, equally confused, he had withdrawn his eyes from hers.

"I believe we have not yet shaken hands," she said. It was the only thing she could find to say.

"There is still time," he smiled, and his hand went out.

Janice laid hers in it, and trembled to know that his clasp was significant. It seemed to have ratified the unspoken compact between them. She lifted her eyes and read in his all that she wanted to know.

It seemed that hours passed before she heard his voice again.

"I suppose I must — I suppose I ought to — to see my cousin," he said bashfully.

"Your cousin!"

"Yes; Miss Catesby. She was with you just now, was n't she? I have to disappoint her by coming instead of my brother."

"Your brother!"

"Yes; and of course you thought I was Logan. I ought to have introduced myself. I am Knight Catesby, Logan's brother. You, of course, are Miss Rendall, Janice's friend."

Janice moved away from him, holding herself very still.

"His brother — his brother — Logan's brother." The words stunned her.

"No," she said aloud, a strange quality in her voice. "I am not Miss Rendall; I am Janice."

He stared at her, and the light died out of his face too.

"But," he stammered, "I thought — I concluded — your white dress — and she was in mourning — "

She took a fold of her skirt in her hands and gazed at it with a childish curiosity.

"Dead people should wear white, should n't they? I am not Heriot; I am Janice. They call me Janice of the laugh and — " her voice broke piteously — "and — and the sad eyes."

He moved away from her and looked out across

the waves. A gust of wind tore the silence into tatters, but neither heard.

When he turned again to the girl, it seemed that he had been facing the storm so long it had written its ravage on his face.

"Logan could n't come for you," he said quietly. "He may have to leave for the war at any moment. He sent me to take his place and bring you home to Scaurlets."

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"I've changed my mind. I'm going by sea," Janice said obstinately. "Why should I travel by rail when I can go in the Seagull?"

"You forget; every moment is of importance," Knight pleaded. "Logan will be bitterly disappointed if he has to leave without seeing you. If we start now we can be in England to-morrow."

"He can't carry Scaurlets away in his kit. I suppose Lady Elizabeth will take me in, even though your brother is away. I see no necessity why I should meet him to-morrow, or next year, or the year after." She folded her hands in her lap, tilted her head on the back of the deck chair, and regarded him with perverse eyes. "You will lose the train if you stay to argue the point, my cousin."

"Train?" he said irritably. "Do you suppose I am going by train without you? I am here to take you to Scaurlets, whether by sea or by land."

Janice shrugged her shoulders. "If I don't offer you a berth on the Seagull?"

"Then I must sleep on deck and freeze in the bay."

Her mouth trembled. She looked up at him, and both laughed, — a sudden laugh of pure, young happiness.

"Stewart," she called to one of the sailors, "send to the Hôtel de France for Mr. Catesby's things and prepare the aft cabin. Mr. Catesby will sail with us."

She turned again to Knight. "So that is settled. They say it will be a stormy passage. Blackie is too miserable to live. You don't mind?"

"I mind only the thought of Logan's disappointment."

"You seem devoted to your brother. What is he like? Like — like you?" She turned from him and looked up at the flag flapping overhead. It was no longer at half-mast.

"Like me?" He laughed impatiently. "I suppose there is some resemblance — not much, though. I am a very plain edition of him, — the ugly duckling edition. The gods have been very good to Logan. They have given him so much they could spare me nothing."

She noted the bitter ring in the words.

"Come, you have n't much to complain of!" she said lightly.

"Oh, wait till you see Logan. He is one of the finest fellows, physically, mentally, morally, that I ever met."

"How I detest mental and moral excellence!"

"Well," he conceded, "put that way I daresay it sounds unattractive. But wait till you see Logan. He is perfect."

"So Daddy said; but Daddy never saw you, did he? How was that?"

"I was in North America. I came back only last week. I wish I had known your father. Logan is enthusiastic about him, and usually he is so reserved."

"What a good match he would be for Heriot!" Janice cried, sitting up suddenly. "Is n't she lovely? Did you ever see anyone so stately and graceful and calm? Now I wonder — I wonder if it could n't be arranged — a match between them? I believe they would suit each other admirably."

Her air was very eager, her fingers twisted nervously together, her eyes glittered.

Knight stared. "I wonder if she knows," he thought. "Sir Logan must have spoken to her. No; she can't know."

"Logan is not a man for whom one arranges," he said aloud. "I imagine that Miss Rendall has a strong will, too. We heard how beautiful she was. When I saw you this morning I thought that — that you were Miss Rendall."

"And when I saw you this morning I thought that — that you were Logan," said Janice.

Their eyes met — a piteous appeal in hers, shrinking and fear in his. Each grew pale. Knight walked away, then came back to her.

"I see the dingey is going off," he said unsteadily. "I wonder if, after all, I had not better go home by rail and explain to Logan."

"As you please," said Janice rising. "It is very likely you will be bored on the yacht. Blackie is never on deck, and Heriot and I are a great deal to each other. You may not like to be what we call in Italy the *terzo incommodo.*"

"You offer me every inducement to remain," he said coldly. "That's the rôle I've played all my life, and am still likely to play." He bit his lips to hide their trembling.

Janice threw a glance over her shoulders as she walked leisurely away. "Goodbye," she called mockingly.

His eyes followed her. "The witch!" he said. "Of course it's all settled. Logan is not stone that he should resist her."

Suddenly Janice turned and came swiftly along the deck, a bewildering smile breaking through her mood like sun through cloud. She sat down again and pointed to the empty chair beside her.

"Tell me about Scaurlets," she said softly. "Such a curious name it is. It suggests all sorts of things, — dark tragedies, secret romances. I want to know what it is like. Is the house gay or gloomy? Is Lady Elizabeth a very great lady, stately and terrible, as the Lady of Scaurlets should be?"

He stood irresolute, his blue eyes dark with

struggle, listening to the sound of the dingey being cast off from the yacht.

The sea had quietened since morning. White clouds swung about the rigging, rifted by the struggling sun. It touched the houses clustering about the harbour till they gleamed like fine ivory. The splash of oars from the dingey came with the sound of a soft hand-clapping.

Knight gulped down something in his throat, shook off his doubts, threw himself into the chair, and turned a lively face to Janice.

CHAPTER VI

"YOU want to know about my mother?" Knight laughed. "Oh yes, I suppose she is a very great lady. I remember as boys we always thought Lady Elizabeth, the owner of Scaurlets, a person of greater importance than my father, who was simply Major Catesby. But 'stately and terrible,'" — he laughed again amusedly, — "well, wait till you see her. She is very little, very old, witty, and wicked. There you have her."

"I am glad she is wicked," said Janice; "I shall like her."

"Logan and I adore her," he said shyly.

"What a nice, nice boy he is," Janice thought. "Why did Daddy never speak of you?" she asked, and he wondered at the mingled resentment and regret in her voice.

"He never saw me, and a younger son is not a person of consequence. I am younger than Logan by half an hour, but it might as well have been half a century."

"Twins!" Janice exclaimed. "Then you must be alike. It was your modesty gave him all the advantages."

"That half hour gave them. I have never envied him before." His face changed. He straightened himself. "But you wanted to know about Scaurlets. You will like it, — a grim old place, perched on the rocks, with the sea at its feet; wind-swept all the year round, very wild, very picturesque. It 's lonely in winter, but one never feels lonely at Scaurlets. There are firwoods round the house, and miles of moorland. You would scarcely think you were on a tiny island. It is Craggan, one of the Hebrides. Scaurlets is the only house of any importance. We own nearly the whole island."

Janice drew a long breath. "An island! I did n't know it was on an island. And firwoods and moorland? Oh, I shall like it. But I shall miss the olives and the sun."

"We have n't much sun in winter, but the cold is dry and fine. It is like wine in your veins."

"And you are out of doors all day?" she asked, brightening.

"Yes; you 'll think me an idle fellow. I 'm nearly always out — on the sea or tramping the moors. But Logan is better; he cares for books and useful things. Then, he 's a soldier."

"Why are n't you a soldier too?"

His face darkened. "We could not both leave my mother — and he had the first right." Again Janice heard the bitter ring in his voice.

"I shall like the moors," she said dreamily. "I

shall like to tramp all day and feel the cold like wine in my veins."

"I 'll teach you to shoot and ride," he said eagerly. "Can you shoot and ride? I 've been breaking in a young mare for you. She has Arab blood in her and goes like the wind."

Janice clapped her hands. "Ah, so I can escape! I need n't be shut up in the house all day with — with books. I hate books. One 's thoughts are better, — wider, greater."

"I wonder what your thoughts are like?" he said, looking at her with very friendly eyes.

"Ah, how can I tell you? They are like the wind, harping in the high boughs of the pines. They are like the wind, swift-footed, folding wide spaces about it like a garment. They are like the wind, restless, moaning in the night with the burden of the souls that sin. And, again, they are like the wind, wistful as the kiss you give a new-born baby."

She got up and stretched her arms wide, a superb movement that suggested the flight of a bird. Her eyes were shining.

Knight rose also, his eyes, shining like hers, feasting on her face. They stood gazing at each other, it might have been a moment, it might have been a lifetime. Then he put out his hand to her.

> "Half angel and half bird,
> And all a wonder and a wild desire,"

he whispered, the beat of his heart strangling him.

"Angel? Bird?" she repeated wonderingly. Then her face woke to sudden memory. "No, no! you forget," she said harshly. "I am Janice of the laugh and the sad eyes."

"It is only a day or two, Blackie dear. Give me two days in which to be happy," Janice pleaded.

"But, my dear, it 's not happiness; it 's recklessness. It 's — I don't know what it is. You sing, you laugh, you dance. My dear, is it quite respectful to your future husband?"

"I have all my life, all my weary life, in which to be respectful to him, but only a few hours for happiness. I claim those."

Janice picked up a book from the chair beside her and threw it at Miss Black. It missed the lady, went spinning over the side of the ship, and fell into the sea.

"Oh!" said Janice.

"Oh, my dear! It was your cousin's book. He had just been reading to me the story of Launcelot and Guinevere."

"Tennyson?" she said, her lips curling. "At his age, Tennyson!"

"No, my dear, Malory; and that is for every age. He reads very beautifully, with great feeling. What a fine spirit he has; such a contrast to your turbulence. And now he 'll never finish the story. Is n't it enough that I have to struggle with a turbulent sea but you must give me a turbulent spirit to contend with, Janice?"

"The sea is as controlled and tranquil as I am, Blackie dear. If I were not so settled you 'd see me all storm and passion."

Janice locked her arms about her knees and gazed provokingly at the perturbed lady in the deck chair.

"Well, if extremes ever met," the lady sighed, "they have met in you. You will not impress your cousin with your staid demeanour, my dear. I doubt if he will consider you a fit bride for his brother."

"I doubt if he will," Janice laughed.

"And first impressions are everything. In the moment of encounter one sees the real person in a flash. Afterwards the real person withdraws behind his words and acts."

"Blackie, you are absolutely clear. The sea must have shaken you out of yourself."

"It has indeed, Janice. Now my mind is too clear for comfort. I see that certainty of evil may be less disquieting than uncertainty of good. In this mind I would be willing to marry if my beloved Peregrine were here."

"What a pity he is not!"

"It is indeed. I would like to compare him with our new and very charming acquaintance, Mr. Catesby."

"You think my cousin charming?"

"Who would not, my dear? I am watching with the keenest pleasure the course of events between him and our sweet Heriot."

"Heriot!" Janice exclaimed.

"You are surprised, dear; but it 's only natural. Of the three of us she is the one best suited to him."

"Oh," said Janice queerly.

"I am surprised you have not noticed their absorption in each other. They 're there now talking to each other."

Knight and Heriot stood together in the bow of the boat. Janice noticed their pleased faces.

"He is talking of Logan," she said; "he can talk of nothing else."

"And how dear of him that is! One can see that he has your marriage at heart."

"Has he told you so?"

"Indeed, yes — unless he referred to Sir Launcelot and Guinevere. But it could not have been; his only thought is for his brother."

"And Heriot apparently. You forgot Heriot, Blackie."

"Yes, dear child. I forgot our beautiful Heriot; it is generous of you to remind me. Janice, surely, surely the wind is not rising again?"

Horror on her face, Miss Black tottered to her feet and gripped the arm of her chair.

"So it is!" Janice laughed. "You 'll have to go down again to your cabin, poor Blackie. Let me help you down. Take my arm."

Miss Black looked toward the bow of the boat.

"Mr. Catesby," she faltered. "He is so strong and tender. One feels so secure of one's self in his hands."

"You must not take him from Heriot. Come, Blackie."

She led Miss Black to her berth, established her there, and returned to the deck, where she remained forlorn and neglected. Knight and Heriot seemed unaware that she was alone.

The wind had risen after two days' calm, and the Seagull was pitching merrily. With a dark face Janice watched the boat spring into the trough of the waves and spring again to the crest. The sun was shining, tempering the icy cold of the day. The white-maned waves tumbled over each other. The wind frolicked among them, a sunny playfellow. It caught Janice's hair and tossed it into little rings; it twisted the folds of her gown about her; it tore her black thoughts into shreds and carried them away. She drank in the strength and joy of it. She wondered how those two people could stand quietly talking, unaware of the delight of the wind.

The deck became too narrow for her. She wanted to dance, she wanted to fly, she wanted to float away in the arms of the wind! If she could only climb the mast! There was room for her to stand up there free among the winds; and those two people were too occupied with each other to care or notice what she did.

She gathered up her skirts, climbed, and gained footing on the rigging. Her face puckered into smiles. She was free — and no one had seen her. But her perch was more perilous than she had

thought. With every dip of the boat the spar on which she stood swung dizzily. She was in danger, but no one noticed, no one cared.

After all, peril was a good thing. What a good swift solution to her problem it offered. A sudden lurch, a sudden plunge, and peace! No necessity to marry the unknown Logan. No necessity to watch Knight and Heriot. She hated herself for her doubts of Knight and Heriot. The shrieking of the wind in the rigging gave voice to her doubts.

She had to guard to keep her poise in the tumult of her doubts. And after all, it would be good to see Heriot's life growing richer day by day beside the barrenness of hers.

"Janice! oh Janice!"

Heriot's cry of terror roused her. She leaned forward and gazed down into the faces lifted to hers. The thing she saw in the man's eyes made the devil of mischief take possession of her again.

"Come up!" she called gaily. "Come up and swing in the wind."

"Janice, come down. Are you mad?"

It was Knight's voice, strained and stern. His white lips set her heart to a beat of triumph.

"Come up, and fetch me — if you dare."

"Don't you see, girl, a lurch may carry you over?"

She made a mocking grimace at him; but she tightened her grip on the mast, for the Seagull was rolling heavily.

Something flapped before her face; she saw the waves rise up as if to tear her from her hold, her head spun, she closed her eyes, stunned. The next moment she was slipping into the fold of an arm, and she heard Knight's voice in her ear: —

"Let go, I have you safe."

A numbness of danger escaped came over her. She seemed to sink through miles and miles of space, and then — She was on deck, and Heriot was stroking her face and crying over her. She opened her eyes to Knight, stern and ashen, bending beside her. She was glad he suffered, and she laughed a broken little laugh. But the sailors were there too and terror was on all their faces. She raised herself on her elbow.

"How absurd you all are! There was no danger."

"You almost killed yourself!" Heriot wailed. "If Mr. Catesby had been an instant later — "

"What did you do, I wonder?"

Janice turned to Knight, a gleam of laughter in her eye. He got up and walked away without answering.

"A spar struck you," said Heriot, "the very instant he got to you. He saved you from falling."

"That was a pity," said Janice, with mocking gravity. "It 's always a pity to interfere with the trend of another person's nature."

CHAPTER VII

SCAURLETS was more like a farmhouse than a castle, and yet more like a castle than a farmhouse. It had stood empty many years, and it was only of late that Lady Elizabeth had chosen to live in it. During these years of neglect the house had put on fine tones of damp and moss that subdued its masonry and softened its grim aspect. It had been built in fighting times, and its walls and turrets were thick. They bore well the onset of the fierce winds from the Atlantic, but they missed every charm of gentle outline. They stood cold, implacable as the rocks from which they rose, and they looked with changeless eyes at the shifting seas that washed them. By day Scaurlets was hard and grim; only at night the cheery lights through lattice and doorway suggested the tender shelter it offered.

Janice stood on the deck of the Seagull gazing at her future home, and her face was white. She was alone. When the lights of Scaurlets had flashed out across the sea, darkness had fallen on the Seagull. It had silenced Knight's laugh and the girl's gay banter. With a chill word Knight had left her; and Janice stood, her heart failing her, her trapped

eyes unable to escape from the sight of the place that claimed her.

Miss Black and Heriot were below, happy in the end of the voyage. Heriot had lost her fear for Janice. Knight's talk of his brother told her that Sir Logan had chosen wisely. Morning, noon, and evening Knight rang the chimes of Logan's perfections; and if the bells swung to an impetus given more by fear of being unjust than by justice itself, there was nothing in his frank manner to betray the truth to his listeners. Heriot lost her fear and was happy in seeing Janice's happiness. The cloud that had rested on her since her father's death had been lifted. The sunny, brilliant Janice had flashed out again, and the deck of the Seagull had seen a riot of youth and laughter. Knight was as gay as Janice. He, too, had thrown the future to the winds. The hour was his and hers, whatever Logan might claim afterwards. Now the voyage was over, and the lights of Scaurlets shining out extinguished the lights on their faces.

A bell on a sunken rock tolled monotonously. The Seagull neared the harbour.

Janice saw the high grey walls of the house, the gloom of the woods beyond, and her heart ran for shelter to the thought of the sun-washed villas and the sun-bathed hills of Florence. Twilight was on the sea, on the sky, on the woods — a chill twilight with a knell tolling in its breast.

The knell was like her promise, that had clanged

doom — and clanged without ceasing even under the clamour of her gaiety — from the moment when she had looked, not into Logan's eyes, but into his brother's. The chill of night had settled that day on her life. Would sunrise ever flush the towers?

She would marry Logan if he asked her to marry him. Her dead father claimed her promise. But perhaps he would not ask her to marry him. Why should not he and Heriot love each other? She put up her hand and brushed aside the hair that the wind blew into her eyes. It was the hair whipping her eyeballs that made them burn and smart till she could not see the lights of Scaurlets for pain.

Every window flashed welcome. Down at the little pier a bonfire blazed welcome to the voyagers.

Seen nearer, the house was impressive in its gaunt strength. Its grave reserve rose nobly above the restless sea.

"It is like Heriot; a very shrine for Heriot," Janice said.

They were near enough to see figures moving on the pier, to hear voices shouting. The tall figure outlined by the leaping flames must surely be Logan's.

She brushed the hair from her eyes. "This untidy hair, always in the way!"

Then she lifted herself, and life went bounding again in her. A childish hope quickened her from head to heel.

There was still time! Surely there was time be-

fore the Seagull reached the pier! She did not stop to think. The impulse was too urgent for any consideration but the one.

She flew down to her cabin and looked eagerly round for scissors, knife, anything that would cut!

Her maid had packed everything for landing.

"Oh! oh!" Janice gasped. "I must find the scissors. I must! It is my one chance. Ah, the dressing case!"

She opened it breathlessly. Yes, the scissors were there! Her face broke into smiles. "I have time! I have time!"

In another moment the scissors were at work and she was cutting away at the heavy locks of hair she had unbound. She laughed with delight as the golden shower fell at her feet. Her face, piquant and sparkling, emerged shorn of its glory. She tiptoed before the glass and made a bow to herself.

"That's beautiful! Now, Janice, you look a perfect fright."

They were at the pier, but she had had time.

Her work had transformed her from the pale, sad Janice of the twilight into a rosy Janice, tumultuous with hope.

She had no thought for Scaurlets, glooming and flashing over the little harbour. Her thoughts had flown to a sun-bathed villa on a Tuscan hillside, and she saw two lovers, sunny-haired and laughing, wandering among purple-laden vines.

She knew Knight loved her. She had not doubted

it since that day when his arm had snatched her from death. And she loved him.

The vision sparkled in her eyes. She danced up the companion stair and danced along the deck to the stern where Heriot stood. "Heriot," she cried, the triumph of hope making her voice ring like bells. "My eyes are glad! Look at me! My eyes are glad!"

Heriot turned, and the man with her. Both were silent; the man wondering, Heriot dismayed; and Janice danced into the light of the lamp before she saw that it was not Knight who was with Heriot, but Knight glorified.

She had thought Knight handsome, but he was insignificant beside this royal person. She stared into his face, breathless, startled. He looked down at the childish little face, at the little face childish with its closely cropped curls, and a look of tender protection softened his eyes. His lips relaxed. Her brightness and energy stormed his gravity. He put out his hand with a gesture that claimed her.

"This is Janice!" he said softly.

"Yes," she faltered; "I thought it was Knight, but, but — is it Logan?"

He noticed that her smile had grown fine and thin, but it did not remove his impression of her sparkling childishness. Talking to Heriot he had wondered if Janice could be more beautiful than this beautiful, stately girl. Before Janice, he did not think whether she was beautiful or not. She was Janice, enchant-

ing, alluring. If the wish of his dead cousin had not pointed the road of love, Janice herself would have led him that way.

"It is Logan!" he said, a ringing victory in the words. "And it is Janice at last!"

He held her hand, that had grown cold in his, and drew her nearer.

"Oh, Janice, what have you done? What have you done? Your beautiful hair!" Heriot cried.

"Yes," said Janice, "I cut it off. I thought — I thought —" Her voice failed. She looked at Heriot with the frightened gaze of a child thwarted in its will.

"Where is Knight?" she went on inconsequently. "Is n't he here?"

"He has gone ashore," said Logan. "Shall we go too? I am longing to take you to my mother."

Janice's heart gave a great beat and sank, stunned. His words and manner told her that she had sacrificed her beauty to no purpose. It was to her that Logan spoke, not to Heriot; he had not once glanced at Heriot. That "I am longing to take you to my mother" told her that he would claim her promise.

"I must find Miss Black and Saunders," she said hurriedly, snatching at an excuse for respite. "I must wait for them."

"No, they will come afterwards. You and Miss Rendall will come with me now."

She toiled up the steep path leading from the shore to the house, her feet lingering as her heart lingered.

Logan's measured talk beat on her ears with the sound of the bell on the sunken rock. He was horribly masterful. It was this that made him different from his brother. Knight's strength was the strength of the spring sun gaily wooing; Logan's was the power of a rushing torrent, compelling, irresistible.

The cliff road merged into a yew-bordered path that gave directly on the grey windy turrets of Scaurlets. The wide doors stood open and the light flooded out on the steps. Janice saw a background of glowing red, and thrown up on it a quaint old lady in flowered silk who stood, dwarfed, beside Knight.

She shrank behind Heriot, but Logan took her hand and drew her forward. "Mother, I have brought Janice home."

"Hoity toity! it seems to me you've had very little to do with it," the lady screamed, in a high, shrill voice. "Welcome home, child!" She patted Janice on the cheek. "Poor little bird that the storm has blown to us. You are only just in time, Logan," she turned gaily to her son, "the telegram has come. You must start to-morrow. They have hot fighting, it seems, and more troops are wanted."

She ended with a laugh, and Janice wondered that she could send her son so lightly into danger, perhaps to death. She had a quick impulse of pity for Logan, and she spoke impetuously.

"How can you laugh?" she said, indignant and hurt.

Lady Elizabeth laughed again.

"Child, you have n't learned your lesson yet. Women must learn to pluck out the right eye, to cut off the right arm smiling, — if it 's their duty to maim themselves."

"But he is your son," Janice said passionately. "And he may never come back!"

"Hoity toity, child! I have many sons. Every soldier who goes out to be shot at is my son. And this is your friend Heriot? My dear, I knew and loved your mother."

She held out her hand to Heriot and drew her into the hall. Janice turned quickly to Logan, indignation overcoming every other sentiment.

"I am so sorry you are going to fight, so sorry," she said earnestly. "But you will come back soon."

His face had not changed when his mother spoke. Now he looked at Janice with a gratitude that moved her.

"The fortunes of war. I wish my summons had come later — or sooner."

Knight stepped out from his place in the shadow.

"Look here, old chap. Let me go instead of you — we can fix it up somehow. Fighting would just suit me. I want to kill something."

Logan put his hand on his shoulder. "You have to stay here and take care of the women, you know."

The new note in his voice made Janice look curi-

ously at him. Then her eyes wandered to Knight, and she had a sudden flash of insight that showed her a man caught in a snare from which he had not strength to break. She could not imagine Logan snared against his will. Was Knight, then, less of a man than his brother?

She saw in Logan something that reminded her of her father. "I wish I had met him first. If only I had met him first!" she said to herself passionately.

CHAPTER VIII

THE wax candles spread a soft yellow light among the shadows of the big drawing-room where Lady Elizabeth and her sons were waiting for their guests.

Logan, his eyes on the door, stood with his back to the fire; tall as he was his head did not reach to the oak chimney-piece with its carved motto, — "Who trusts loves."

"Well, mother, and what do you think of them — of her?" he asked.

"Foolish, fat, and fatuous!" snapped the old lady. "The sooner she is married and out of this house the better I shall be pleased."

"Janice fat!" Logan exclaimed.

"Janice foolish!" Knight cried at the same moment.

"Who is talking of Janice?" Lady Elizabeth twinkled. "I am talking of Miss Black."

"I am talking of Janice," said Logan; "of Janice and Heriot."

"Oh!" said Lady Elizabeth, and said no more.

"You a.e a wicked old, provoking old, exasperating old Lady Elizabeth," Logan remarked.

"If you want to know which of the two I want for daughter-in-law —"

"Which do you like better?" Knight interrupted. He picked up a paper-knife and examined the blade with some interest.

"Stupid! Who would look at that passionate pretty baby beside a woman like Heriot? She is magnificent, — fine animal, fine soul. I did n't think that nature took the trouble to turn out such fine work nowadays."

"She is splendid!" said Knight, his sunny enthusiasm flashing out unexpectedly; "as — as reliable as Logan himself, and so sane and balanced. Clever too — has read everything. Janice hates books — threw the only one on board into the sea."

"She is a book herself," Logan smiled; "a book of songs, glees, madrigals, triolets. There 's a lyric in her every look."

"That 's what I call her tomboy look," his mother said. "Oh, I know my Janice, — wilful, spoiled; as full of whims as her hair of curls."

"She has such pretty baby curls," said Logan. "That 's her great charm. She would not be such a witch if she had long hair coiled sedately like Heriot's."

"It would never be sedate, don't be afraid!" said the lady. "She has n't a straight line about her."

"You should have seen her hair, mother!" Knight put in eagerly. "You never saw such hair — all crinkled and shining like—like—I don't know what it was like. There was never anything so beautiful. Why she cut it off —"

"Cut it off, did she?" Lady Elizabeth snapped. "Oh yes, I can believe she would cut off her own head for a whim, determined little hussy!"

"I knew she had a will," said Logan. "Her father believed she would make a very fine woman."

His mother pursed up her lips. "That depends on the man she marries. Her mother was a fine creature. There, don't remind me that a better woman than myself married Logan Catesby; it makes me spiteful to think of it."

"She is not a bit like her father," Logan said.

"Exactly why I don't approve of her. She had the opportunity of a lifetime and did n't take it."

"But don't you think those sad eyes with that smiling mouth very pretty and pathetic?" Logan asked.

"A trick of the muscles, my son. Don't trust a woman who wears contradiction on her face. What right has her mouth to smile when her father has n't been dead three months? She is n't even faithful. Heriot shows more feeling. She is the finer character."

"Most people would think so," Knight said slowly; "and one feels she would be faithful to death. But it seems to me — I wonder if you could n't be as certain of Janice under her wild moods?"

"Bah!" exclaimed Lady Elizabeth, "as well wonder which is more likely to break in a crash, the silver rose bowl or the Grecian urn over there."

"But it is the Grecian urn that inspires the ode," Logan put in quickly. "And it is the Grecian urn that is vivid with life, — the merry nymph, love's gay pursuit." He stroked his moustache to hide the smile which lifted the corners of his mouth. It was so seldom that he smiled. But life had all at once grown vivid and alluring. A gay little figure danced down its sombre way. He heard a peal of laughter routing the silences that lurked in his sober years.

"Mother," he said suddenly, "I am leaving her with you. You will be very good to her? You will help her where she fails? You will teach her faithfulness — if she really lacks it?"

"I teach her? Who better?" Lady Elizabeth gave a brisk little cackle. "Was n't I faithful to her father all my life, while I married another man? Is n't Logan Catesby your spiritual father, whoever was your legal father? Boy, it was my love for Janice's father that made you the fine fellow you are — that gave you your name." She stopped a moment, then added, "Yes, and made you Sir Logan."

"That makes his child all the dearer to me," said Logan gravely. Lady Elizabeth sat up sharply in her chair.

"Goodness! Already? And you 've seen the girl just fifty minutes!"

He did not attempt to hide the smile that flooded his face.

"The first minute swept her to my heart, mother.

If she had been a shrew and a scarecrow it would have been my duty to marry her for her father's sake. But now —" he lifted his head and his eyes flashed. "Well, I can think of nothing now but winning her for myself. I shall speak to her to-night."

A tiny snap sounded in the room, and the paper-knife Knight held fell broken to the ground. He got up, gulping down the words that choked him, that he must not say because Logan had the first right to declare his love.

But had Logan the first right? Did not love itself give him a right over Logan? What were the wishes of a dead man, what was fortune or title beside love in a woman's life? He loved Janice and he believed he could win her. But Logan loved her, and her father had given her to Logan — because he inherited his fortune and title. Was Logan to have everything and he nothing? His love fought with his loyalty till only a blank uncertainty was on his face. Ought he to speak? Must he be silent?

He had loved her for an eternity; Logan, one hour only. Which of them had the right to speak first?

"Faint heart never won fair lady," Lady Elizabeth was saying to Logan. "Your love is spirited to match the girl. I think Knight is right, and that Heriot is the finer character, but I don't mind telling you that I like your choice. She will be very good

discipline for a man that has always had his own way."

Logan laughed. "Oh, your criticism did n't deceive me. When she scolded you I knew you would adore her. But who could help adoring her? Do you know, I was afraid she must have taken some one else by storm too? It 's an immense relief to know that Knight prefers Heriot to Janice."

"And here come silver bowl and Grecian urn!" screamed the old lady, in a panic to drown his voice. "Not too punctual, to be sure, little girls."

She was just too late to prevent Heriot and Janice from hearing Logan's last sentence. It froze Janice on the threshold. "*Knight prefers Heriot to Janice!*" and Knight had not denied it. She stood, fairy-light and intangible, in a mist of white crape. Her arms were bare. The long "angel sleeves," falling back like wings, were transparent on the background of Heriot's black velvet.

It seemed to Janice that she had stood there years and years looking at the group by the fire.

The flowers on Lady Elizabeth's pompadour silk wove themselves into those years and made a mocking spring for her. The carved words on the chimney-piece smote her eyeballs, — "Who trusts loves." She looked from one man to the other, seeing the strong triumph in the set of Logan's head, the uncertainty, the struggle, that lay like a blight on Knight's boyish frankness.

"Blackie was right," she said to herself, her heart

tightening; "Blackie was right. It was Heriot all the time — all the time — and I thought he loved me."

Then she flew forward, her soft draperies, her white wings floating, and took Lady Elizabeth's hand with a gay laugh. "Come, scold me, frown on me! It is I who have spoiled the dinner. Heriot would have been in time, but I made her stop to coax Blackie into sweet inconsequence. Dear Lady Elizabeth, truly I am penitent!"

"Penitent indeed," growled the lady, rising. "Your eyes may look penitent, but your mouth betrays you. So Miss Black won't come down after all? Then she is responsible for disarranging my arrangements for dinner. I am going to take in Heriot. You boys can settle between you who is to have Janice."

"I take my fate into my own hands," said Janice merrily; "I am going in by myself."

Knight was at her side before the words were spoken.

"But that I can't allow," said Logan masterfully, whether to Janice or to his brother did not appear.

Knight fell back, biting his white lips.

"Come, my dear, while they fight we will feast." Lady Elizabeth tucked Heriot's arm in hers and trotted away down the room.

Janice flashed a look at Knight that he did not understand, then curtsied daintily to him and to Logan and swept past them.

She tripped behind Lady Elizabeth down the long room, now and then turning mockingly to the men following. In her airy draperies she seemed the embodiment of some illusive will-o'-the-wisp luring on the brothers.

CHAPTER IX

THE house was very still, so still that the sound of the waves came up into the tower where Heriot walked up and down wakeful and restless.

Outside the night was thick among the firs. It seemed to be creeping into the room in spite of the candles flickering in the silver sconces. She had lighted the candles on the high mantelpiece, and now, with her hair loosened over the straight folds of her white wrapper, she stood like a priestess before an altar of sacrifice. The fire burned low on the hearth. She threw fresh logs on it and saw the flame leap up on the carved motto of the mantel. The words, cut over every fireplace at Scaurlets, battered against her thoughts, — "Who trusts loves."

Did she then love Logan, who had captured her trust at the very instant of encounter? How was it possible that she could love a man seen that day for the first time? But was it the first time? Had she not all her life known, loved, waited for Logan?

It must have been centuries ago since she had sat on a terrace, hearing Sir Logan talk of the splendid young soldier who was already a great man. It had been the time of the vintage, and listening, she

seemed to have been gathering her harvest of purple promise, and of the wine of life young and sweet, stored yet in its living womb. She went over the days of the voyage when the merry din of Logan's praises had been like marriage bells chiming. She had listened to Knight and had been proud and thankful that the man Janice would marry was such a man. And now she knew that the chimes had sung out from the belfry that overtopped the waiting silences where she had built love's altar.

Logan himself had come, and suddenly she faced a love that could touch heights and depths that no other love had ever reached or would ever sound. The half of her nature unrevealed even to herself was shining in the light which makes a new heaven and a new earth.

That very day she had been joyful to claim her realm of womanhood, not seeing that it was ringed round by the salt estranging sea. She drew a deep sobbing breath, remembering the hour when she had stood within sight of her kingdom. The homely dinner had seemed crowned with garlands of rose and pine; a god was at the board, and she feasted with him,—and then—it was Love's Passover, and the taste of the bitter herbs was in her mouth. How strange it had been to see Janice in that fine mood, strong, tender, adorable. No wonder that Knight had been struck dumb by it; no wonder that without a protest Logan had accepted his bonds.

"I drink to Janice," he had said, "to Janice—

and love." And Janice had set her steady lips to the glass and answered gravely, "I drink to love and peace."

The dainty undermeaning in the toast must have fired the soldier. From that moment Janice held his wavering loyalty to her father's will.

"But does she love him? Does she love him?" Heriot had asked herself all the evening, fearing lest Janice should love him, fearing lest Janice should not love him. For if Janice did not love him her life would be wrecked, and if Janice did love him —?

Heriot began to pace the room again, her hair, fallen in great masses to her feet, deepening the shadow in her eyes, her heart facing battle.

Once she had thought that Janice might have loved Knight; but having seen Logan how could she wish that Janice might love a man so inferior? She thought of the two men as they had stood together that evening, Logan's dark strength eclipsing his brother's brightness and energy. The glory had departed from Knight. He seemed to shrink and become insignificant in Logan's presence. He stood there, pale, silent, ineffective, willingly accepting the lower place. His attitude was only redeemed by his hero-worship of Logan, the admiration of the dog for his master.

Heriot scorned the subservience that belittled him. She had no key to his silence and changed looks, and her thoughts lashed him mercilessly and left him cringing at Logan's feet. No, never in justice to

Janice could she wish that the girl might choose Knight rather than Logan. But in justice to herself? — Who had the first claim, the child Janice, who did not know her own heart, or the woman Heriot?

Janice had been restive under her promise to marry Logan, but she had not seen him then. Now it was clear she was at least willing to fulfil her promise. And yet — what made Heriot doubt if Logan was the husband for Janice?

She cleared her mind of personal bias and faced the question squarely. Logan was stern and just, he might even be terrible in anger; and Janice was a wilful, capricious child who had never been thwarted. He was under the glamour of the girl now, and glamour would not stand the strain of married life. He was bound to Janice by Sir Logan's will, but he was not morally bound. He was fascinated, but he did not love her.

Heriot knew it was in her power to loose him and let him go; to call him to her away from the spell of Janice that was weaving a fatal blindness over his eyes. And then she forgot Janice, and her heart flew back to the hour that had given her a sight of her kingdom.

She had stood on the deck of the Seagull watching the lights of Scaurlets flash over the darkening water. The mystery of the twilight was in her heart, and the restlessness of the waves. She distrusted those stern walls in spite of the welcom-

ing lights; they made a grim prison for her light-winged butterfly, the Janice whose life had been free among the roses and anemones; her wind-flower whose stormiest blast had been sun winged. The winds that would howl round Scaurlets would be fanged like wolves; they would spare no tender butterfly or fragile blossom. How would Janice fare among them? Then suddenly Logan was on the deck beside her, and for the first time Heriot had forgotten Janice.

They had talked for an hour, and neither she nor he had wanted to put an end to their talk. Something in the two natures met in that first encounter; their eyes claimed each other. Each had forgotten the dead man's will; to Logan it only existed if he himself willed its existence, and in the presence of this beautiful grave woman it did not exist. Heriot met his eager approval proudly and responsively, gravely seeing the significance of the moment; and without a word both had understood.

Then Janice had burst on that significant silence like the sun on a tender dawn, and Heriot's moment was over. Logan's eyes had lingered about her gracious quiet, and then it was Janice, brilliant and provoking, radiant and illusive that lured him.

It was natural that his cousin should claim his welcome, and Heriot had come down to dinner still accepting the unspoken compact; — and Logan had drunk to Janice and love! It was then that life set its teeth in her heart. The pain of it numbed her.

She knelt down on the hearth and stared into it with eyes of misery. If only she could see clearly, if only she knew certainly that Janice would be happy with Logan. Would the fanged storm spare the dainty wind-flower?

She sprang to her feet and disdained the temptation. She knew she was arguing for herself, pleading her own cause. How could Janice fail to be happy as Logan's wife? How tender and strong he was! A great rock in which her wind-flower would be safe from the ravage of the storm. His wife would be safe with him. And Janice needed protection; she needed to be saved from herself. It was Heriot who could stand alone.

She went back step by step along her life till she saw herself, orphaned, given over to her guardian, Sir Logan Catesby, to find home and love in his wife. She had been loved and protected then. The day had come when she trembled to hold Janice, and trembled still more at Lady Catesby's changed voice. "Heriot, I give my baby to you. Love her as I have loved you, my darling."

Sixteen years had gone by since that night, and Heriot's love had never failed Janice. The charge had sobered her childhood and set her apart in a world that held only Janice, a citadel in which Janice dwelt safely. But now the walls of the city had fallen at the blast of trumpets and an armed host was on her. Another figure, shining, conquering, had taken the city and threatened to chase

Janice from her safe towers; and Heriot felt the ultimate pain of the love that forbids love. Her love for Logan was the foe of her love for Janice.

She stretched out her hands to the fire as if she might find help there, and her eyes grew deep with sacrifice; for love was an altar on which she must offer her womanhood. On the flames she must lay a child, her own little child, bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh; she must see the fire eating the tender limbs.

The horror of it was too great. She snatched the child again to her hope and kissed the flesh until it returned fair and beautiful, and her arms were once more round love and life and the joy of life.

It was her right to love, to win love. She was young and rich and beautiful. She could give Logan a love that would match his.

Sir Logan's will had bound him to Janice, but loyalty to the living forbade loyalty to the dead. She was his wife, not Janice, never Janice! No promise, no vow could ever make Janice Logan's mate, for nature had already given him to her.

A great light rose on her face. She stood transfigured, her eyes shining, her hands crossed humbly on her breast.

In the silence the splash of the waves deep on the rocks below came up into the tower with the sound of sobbing and mingled with the sound of guarded tapping on the door.

Heriot's eyes came back slowly from the inward

vision to meet Janice. She stole in, a vision herself in her trailing gown, her noiseless step, her blank eyes, her ashen face.

"Janice, Janice! What is it?" Heriot whispered fearfully.

"I 'm tired! I 'm tired!" Janice cried. "And the sound of the sea draws me. I dare n't stay alone. The sea calls me. I want to go down into the deep waters. I want to be still in the sea — quiet, quiet — with the water cold on my eyes, and the waves heavy on me, so that my heart would not hurt me any more —"

Her voice was the voice of a weary child; it went straight to Heriot's heart.

"My bird! my bird!" She opened her arms, and Janice flew to her and clung to her trembling.

"My pretty," Heriot crooned, "so cold, so white. And you have n't undressed yet. What has hurt you, sweet? Tell Heriot; tell your own Heriot."

She drew her down to the hearthrug and smoothed away the curls from her forehead and studied her eyes. Only Janice was in her mind now and the old instinct of protection.

"Life hurts," Janice sobbed. "I did n't know it could hurt so; and love — there is no love. Must I marry Logan? Must I? It is n't always right to keep a promise. Would it be right for me to marry him now?"

Heriot's face grew pinched and cold. Strong

lines wove themselves round the strong mouth and the steady eyes.

"Is it settled that you are to marry Logan?"

"He wants it, and I promised Daddy. I cut off my hair, hoping that he would n't like me. I wanted him to like you best — and it was no use. It 's all been of no use. He wants me to marry him. Knight likes you best; — and I promised Daddy."

Heriot opened her lips, but no words came. Mechanically her hand went on stroking the curly head, soothing the child's passion. There was no hand to soothe her own passionate trouble.

"If you don't love him, Janice," she said at last.

"It 's not a question of love," Janice said despairingly; "it 's never been a question of love. I don't believe in love; women think men love them, and they don't. Sometimes they find out their mistake too late." She shivered, and a new look made her face hard. "It 's better to be loved than to love. Logan says he will be good to me. Could you marry him, Heriot? Could you be certain he would never misunderstand you and be unjust to you?"

The question was a hand clutching Heriot by the throat. She struggled in the stress of the moment. For whom must she fight, for Janice, for Logan, or herself? Janice lying in her arms was a weight that made her helpless.

Her thoughts faltered. She was a child again trembling to hold the baby, Janice.

Janice drew herself up and looked piteously into

her eyes. "Ah, Heriot, don't fail me. Help me to do right!"

"How can I help you?" Heriot cried bitterly. "What is right to you is wrong to me."

Her arms loosened and she drew herself apart. Life clamoured in her, woke her to the full consciousness of herself, and the poignant need of her womanhood; but Janice was once more a helpless baby in her arms, claiming her help.

It was not a question of love, it was a question of justice to Logan. How could she tell Janice he was stern and harsh and cold when these things did not exist for her? "Could Heriot marry him? Could Heriot be certain of him?" The infinite irony of it!

"Heriot! Heriot!" Janice cried. "Ah, don't look like that. Your eyes are like dead eyes; they are Daddy's eyes, reproaching me." She put up her hand and covered Heriot's eyes. "You hurt me," she sobbed. "I did n't mean to grieve you. I will do right though it kills me. I know Logan is a good man; at least I can trust him. You think I can trust him? He is so strong and so relentless, he frightens me."

Heriot drew the blinding hand away, but her eyes did not turn to Janice. She must justify Logan. She must be loyal to him. It did not matter who was sacrificed, Janice or herself, so long as Logan was not misjudged.

"Who trusts loves," she answered in a voice that

was surely not hers. "To do right though it kills you? Ah, Janice, will it kill you to take the loveliest thing that can ever be offered to you or to any woman?" Her voice broke. Then she went on steadily. "If you can't be certain of Logan, there is no man living of whom you can be certain. If you don't know what he is, look at him beside Knight; the strong man beside the weak one, the great nature beside the small."

"You are unjust to Knight," Janice cried, her voice ringing sharp.

Heriot's eyes flashed. "I think not," she said proudly. "Look at him and see if you can be certain of him. How can you trust him when he has no trust in himself?"

The words went straight to Janice's brain and found an unwilling confirmation there. Her face changed from its childish appeal and became set and hard. How could she trust the man that to-day made her certain of his love and to-morrow would prefer another woman before her?

Some minutes passed in a strained silence, while Heriot, waiting breathlessly for her words, wondered what horrible thing she was seeing with those set eyes. Suddenly she threw out her hand with a gesture half-passion, half-pride, and drew herself up and stood, a frozen anguish on her drawn face.

"You are right, Heriot. One must not trust a man who does n't trust himself. Well, that is over. I shall keep my promise to marry Logan."

She stared before her, not seeing Heriot or anything. Then she went out as noiselessly as she came in and slipped into her own room. She went to the window, threw it open, and leaned out into the night. A little wind moved in and out of the leafless boughs and stirred the evergreens in the shrubbery. It touched her tenderly, and the darkness folded its arms about her.

The sea below was like the pain in her heart, that was salt with unshed tears, and bitter with the bitterness of love, and restless with the restlessness of life.

She knelt down and laid her head on the window-sill and searched the night for the spirit of the dead thing that was in her heart. And when the day woke and dawn tore the shadows apart, the gleam of a white face among the trees answered her search and broke her calm into terror and pain and pity. For the face lifted to hers was the face of the man she loved.

CHAPTER X

LADY ELIZABETH, standing in the foreground of the group at the door, waved a Union Jack over Logan's head.

"Take it, my son. Come back to Scaurlets with it or in it," she laughed.

Logan took it from her, laughing drily. "Why, it 's our old friend of the tower. I 'll bring it back, never fear."

He looked at Janice as he spoke and past her at Heriot, tall and pale in the shadow of the doorway. Their eyes met, and while he wondered at the deep sadness in hers the laugh died out of his. His gaze passed very slowly back to Janice, and she answered his doubt with a mocking, "Lady Elizabeth is doing the Roman matron."

"Of course I am!" the lady snapped. "Tradition and convention demand that I send him into battle with some such flaunting sentiment. The occasion calls for heroics, patriotism, the noble mother, the broken-hearted but bearing up bravely sweetheart, eh, Janice?" She stood on tiptoe to pat the girl's cheek. "Why, you are cold, child! Come, Logan, hurry off or you will leave us to

fight a greater bore than the Boer, the cold in the head."

"Ah well!" Logan sighed. Then he straightened himself and turned to Knight, already in the dog-cart. His voice reached to the servants huddled in the hall to see their master go.

"Old man, I leave them to you. Don't let Janice fret for her blue skies. Show her that Scaurlets can be gay. Take her to ride on the moors. Let her boat, fish, see what we can give her. You may have some skating before I get back. Mother, you and Miss Rendall will take care of each other."

He sprang into the cart, took the reins from Knight, and drove away. Halfway down the drive he stood up, turned, and waved the flag.

Lady Elizabeth jerked her handkerchief in reply.

"Hip! hip! hooray!" she screamed in her little, cracked voice. "Cheer, servants, cheer your master!"

"Hip! hip! hooray!" went up brokenly from the servants, and was echoed back from the bend of the drive where the flag waved and was lost.

"We are a pack of sentimentalists!" said Lady Elizabeth, marching into the hall. "The morning is playing havoc with my complexion, and with yours too, children. Goodness! what ghosts you both look, to be sure! Janice, at your age I could see a hundred lovers go and only be the prettier for it. You look distinctly aged, my dear, and your hair is out of curl. As for Heriot, Scaurlets does

not become her. Go back to bed both of you, and don't show yourselves till you are more presentable."

"What are you going to do, Lady Elizabeth?" Janice smiled.

"Going to do? Walk twenty miles. That's the proper thing for the heroic mother to do. With a laugh she offers up her son to his country, then she walks and walks to get away from the agony of it. That's what the occasion demands of me. The occasion never demands of me in vain."

"And may I come too?" said Janice merrily. "May I be the heroic mother torn from my son and making no sign?"

"Gracious no, child. If you came you might tell all the world how the broken-hearted mother consoled herself with cigarettes and found further consolation in a nip and bannocks by the wayside."

"I won't tell indeed; I'll have some too. I'm sure I'd like a nip and bannocks by the wayside."

"Fiddles! You don't even know what bannocks are."

"Dear Lady Elizabeth," said Heriot eagerly, "will you let me come with you? I have to take care of you, you know."

"To bed with you both. I have to be alone this morning."

Her eyes defied their sympathy. The tight folds at the corners of the big humorous mouth did not betray her, but Janice felt a pang of remorse at her own joy that Logan was really gone.

The servants had dragged themselves away, openly lamenting; the gloom of the winter morning was on the house like a pall, but her heart was singing like a bird in her.

It was good that Logan was gone, it was good, good! Logan was gone and she was free. Ah! how good it was that she was free. He had gone and taken her problem away with him for time to solve. The chill November morning was gay with the singing of birds. A light laugh, sounding oddly in the heavy silence, tinkled through the hall. She tucked up her skirts, ran down the steps, and disappeared in the garden. Lady Elizabeth smiled grimly. "She has learned to play the game of life already. Heriot, my dear, you must learn too that the laugh takes the trick."

Heriot's face remained grave, her eyes wistful. "Does it? Can one conquer life by laughing at it?"

"To be sure! It's old sobersides who is always worsted. A merry heart goes all the way. They win who laugh."

Heriot bent her eyes on the brisk little lady who was twinkling up at her.

"I don't know what it is to laugh," she said with her fine slow smile. "In all my life I've never had any temptation to laugh."

"Bah!" said Lady Elizabeth.

"True!" smiled Heriot.

"Yet you have lived with Janice, a liberal tempta-

tion to laughter! If you could n't laugh with her, at least you might have laughed at her. No temptation to laugh? Tush, child, that 's a mere pose. Go to bed and sleep it off."

Lady Elizabeth caught up a tam-o'-shanter from the hat-rack, twisted a plaid round her shoulders, and stamped away out of the hall and down the drive, a sturdy, comical figure.

Heriot stood gazing after her. Then she bethought her of Miss Black, who had complained of a chill the night before. She must go upstairs to inquire after her, and she turned from gazing at the desolate drive.

The great hall was very silent and empty. Seen in that chill dawn it lacked the brightness of the welcome it had given them the evening before. The rafters hung like night over the lighter oak of the panels. The furniture was all of oak black with age; there were no pictures, no curtains. The floor was strewn with deerskins, and the only ornaments were a huge screen of dull red leather and great copper jars full of bracken and heather and rowan berries.

Behind the screen a door stood open, showing a long, narrow room lined with books, Logan's study. "The Lion's Den" Lady Elizabeth had called it when she told the girls that it was the one room in the house of which she had not the freedom.

There was no fear of meeting the lion in it to-day.

Stepping reverently, as if entering a room from which the dead had been taken, Heriot passed in and closed the door.

Her heart tightened at the signs of his presence everywhere. The room was quick with the vivid life that had beaten in it only yesterday.

A pile of letters sealed and stamped stood on the desk ready for posting. She touched the writing with wistful fingers, noting its fine lines. She would have known it was Logan's writing wherever she had seen it. All his characteristics were there, his precision, his definiteness, his reserve.

She saw the strong man in every part of the room, — in the chairs disdainful of ease, in the solid bookcase, in the plain bindings of the books. There were books everywhere, piled on the tables, desks, floor. Surely he was more scholar than soldier.

Heriot moved slowly from one bookcase to another, reading the titles. All her favourite books were there. The library might have been chosen specially for her. It was a new irony to find that they were mentally allied.

She sat down and leaned her head on her hand and wondered if she had done right to urge Janice to marry a man whose tastes she did not share.

The "Divina Commedia" lay open on the table beside her. After a while she took it up and read: —

> "They shut their gates, those enemies of ours,
> In my Lord's face who there remained outside them,
> And turned again towards me with slow footsteps."

She looked up, and a dreamy shadow troubled her eyes. When she looked down again she had lost the lines and she read further down the page: —

> "Even now, this side it, down the steep is coming,
> And passing through the circles with no escort,
> One by whose means the city shall be opened."

At once, in a freak of memory, other words came to her. "You locked the gate; it is you must open it." Janice's voice, as if she stood there with her. And suddenly the scene in the far-away Italian villa was before Heriot, — the great gates with their symbolic flames and the torches interlaced, the olives beyond, the dark note of the cypresses, the light melody of anemones and tulips all about the windy land; and she and Janice outside the gates, she holding the key.

She had opened the gates to Janice then. She would open them to Janice again now, and Janice would enter the garden where the winds were merry among the purple blossoms and the scarlet petals, where they tossed up the silver olive boughs and fell back baffled by the unyielding cypresses. The figure was pricked out against her fancy; she read every detail of the imagery, and it shone out with sharp meaning. She saw it all. She saw herself "coming down the steep and passing through the circles with no escort," though the man she would have chosen of all men was close beside her.

She must go down the steep way of life alone,

passing circle after circle of the years before her. Well, she could take her way with a strong heart if only Janice were safe, if only the City of Love had really been opened to the child.

She turned the book to glance at the fly-leaf, and then her thoughts swung violently back from Janice and herself. "Knight Catesby. Scaurlets. 1895," she read. The fine clear writing was Logan's, but what in the world had Knight to do with the "Divina Commedia"?

CHAPTER XI

MEANWHILE Janice was flitting about the garden, discovering quaint nooks, paths green with moss, leafless arbours, tangles of sodden vines, rotting leaves.

To her the wintry desolation was beautiful. The thought of her freedom went with her like cymbals clashing. It flashed with the flash of the first sun-rays that broke through the mirk. It chirped with the chirp of the robin in the laurel bush.

What a charming old garden in which to be free. The sedate yews, the clipped hedges, the box borders, the rose trees that were all thorn, made a brave setting for liberty, giving it that touch of austerity that redeemed it from license.

She liked the pleached alleys, where she could imagine herself straying with the bee a whole summer morning, undiscovered. And there were stone benches, moss-ridden, that reminded her of her villa garden in Tuscany, and here and there she came upon a faun or a nymph that was surely an old friend. She was glad there was no faun with two faces here. The fauns were frankly fauns, not angel or fiend, but gay pagans, children of the grove for

whom spring smiled and summer laughed, whose feet the violets kissed, whose head the roses crowned. Oh, she liked the garden!

There was a parapet at the end of the garden and the grey glimmer of the sea beyond it. She ran towards it, and kissed her hand at the waves and said foolish fond things to this friend who had come with her all the way from Italy and now stayed with her in this grim Scottish island. How sheer the rocks dropped to the sea. The house seemed to have sprung from the rock, the walls were splashed with lichen-stains and mould and sea-spray to the likeness of the parent stones.

Janice saw something fine in the reticence of the walls that kept the secret of the life inside. She wondered which of those narrow windows was hers. She and Heriot were in the tower rooms, she knew. She examined the tower. Ah! that was the window where she had knelt in misery, forgetting that the morning would bring her reprieve. It was there that she had seen that dead-white face. Ah! Knight had tried to blind her, but she had found out his secret. He loved her! he loved her!

Her mouth puckered into smiles, she held her head high, daintily defiant of fate. Logan was gone, and Knight loved her. She had weeks and weeks, months, years perhaps, to be happy in, before she need remember that she had promised to marry Logan. Where was it exactly that Knight had stood?

She picked up her skirts and tiptoed along the path, peering about her for footprints. Her face was rosy, a lurking mischief lighted her smile; she stepped delicately, as if afraid of startling the secret she had pounced upon at dawn. She would find out its haunt among the bushes; she would make it show its face that it had tried to mask.

Ah, here! But what a heavy-hearted secret to have made such havoc with the ground. The bed was trodden as if with the passing of many feet. A man must have walked to and fro, to and fro all night to have made that beaten track. A very tender light softened her eyes.

"Poor boy!" she whispered.

But soon her face was dimpling again, her lips curving. "I am glad he was miserable," she said to herself. "He made me very miserable. He made me so miserable I was glad I promised to marry Logan."

She looked about for a seat and sat down where she could see the marks of that eloquent vigil. And while she sat, her face changed from gay to grave, from inconsequence to purpose; from grave to gay again, from purpose to inconsequent mischief.

Once she tapped her foot impatiently, once her hands clenched. Once she kissed the dimple on her hand, and then she looked round guiltily, reddened, and sat very still.

She sat so still, the wintry sun stealing about the garden found her and spread a net of gold over her.

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There was no sound in the green alley but the splash of waves faint against the rocks and the stealthy moving of a light wind in the evergreens round the chapel.

She lifted her head and saw him on the path before her, — the old Knight, sunny and eager, with the dash and the charm that had snared her heart when he stepped on board the Seagull.

"You have come back?" Her shy smile was adorable.

"Well?" he smiled down at her. "And do you think you will be happy at Scaurlets?"

"Happy!" she echoed. "Ah, it 's too beautiful — kind and grey and old and full of secrets. Ah! such secrets! I will make it tell me them, every one. And this garden, full of secrets too. Every rose-bush has its secret, set round with thorns to pretend it is n't a handful of fairy sweetness. But wait!" She pouted and looked at him with charming daring. "See if I don't make the silly, silly rosebushes give up all their secrets."

"When summer comes," he smiled.

"When summer comes!" she laughed. "Ah! summer will be a long festa."

He shook his head. "Even in summer it is stormy here."

"That is what is so wonderful. Under the boughs, among the paths the sound of the sea, the nearness of the wide spaces of the sea."

"You have not seen the cliffs?"

"No. I shall not like them better than the garden."

"The garden! But there are no flowers, nothing but bare boughs and rotting leaves."

"Ah, you don't know! The flowers come out at night. I hear them whispering secrets by my window."

She thought she saw his face change, but he answered lightly, "Oh, those are the bats."

"Yes," she agreed. "They haunt the tower. If you look from the tower windows at night you know the bats are awake and watching with you."

She was laughing in his face, delighted at his clumsy efforts to appear ignorant of any meaning in the words.

"Infernally cold for man and bat," he said, poking up the gravel with his stick and finding some interest in the occupation.

"It must have been." She gave a little shiver. "I hope you did n't take cold." She looked straight into his eyes, her voice was grave, the corners of her mouth twitched.

"Take cold? I? Why?" His eyes met hers, frankly puzzled. She gave a dainty shrug of her shoulders.

> "The night was long, the night was cold,
> The minstrel was infirm and old,"

she sang, misquoting, with a glance at his puzzled face. He was acting rather well she thought.

"Did you have a comfortable night?" she asked, a sudden sharp interrogation in her eyes.

"Comfortable? Anything but comfortable. Confounded bad dreams."

"Dreams? You were dreaming?" She stared at him.

"All night," he answered easily.

"You slept all night! Yet you knew your brother was going away? Kind brother Knight! What did you dream?"

"I was fighting instead of Logan, and the fight was against me. Not very interesting, was it?"

"Not at all interesting." She got up with a sudden petulance. The dream was not what she had expected. But if Knight had been asleep and dreaming all night, who was it that had watched with her?

"You look cold and hungry," said Knight. "Let us go in; it must be near luncheon time."

"I'm not going in. I'm not cold and not hungry."

Her glance at him was defiant and brief, but she had had time to notice the grip in the set of his shoulders, the strength with which he was holding himself in. "I am going down to the sea," she said impetuously. "I shall take a boat and go out. I want to be alone."

"The boats are being overhauled. They will be ready in a day or two. Meanwhile lunch is ready, and lunch is a good thing when it is six hours since one breakfasted."

She turned on him passionately. "Lunch! lunch! Sleep and eat, that is all you think of. Oh, I have no patience with a man who sleeps soundly all night when — when —" Her voice broke; she stared at the ground trampled down by that night-long vigil. Oh, it was cruel! She had been so certain it was Knight, and it had been Logan!

She winked away the angry tears and steadfastly kept her face turned from Knight, so that she did not see how her words had stung him. He took two or three quick strides along the path, fighting again the fight he had fought all night. The battle was against him. Should he tell her? Should he tell her? Logan was gone. The thought was a whip-stroke that bit into his conscience. Because Logan was gone he must not betray him. Because Logan was gone he must not let Janice guess.

He turned again towards her. "Janice," he said quietly, "a man may do worse than spend the night dreaming of honour and loyalty and truth."

"Honour, loyalty, truth!" she cried shrilly. "Bats! bats! bats! A fig for your dreams! They are such stuff as wings are made of."

She brushed past him and ran towards the house. Then she ran back, and smiling, made him a mocking curtsey.

"Come, Sir Knight, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

He answered her with a whimsical smile, "Dear lady of the winged dreams, even to-day we die."

CHAPTER XII

"A WOMAN'S soul? Hm!" Lady Elizabeth grunted.

The tones said clearly she did not believe that a woman had a soul. Miss Black dropped her knitting, clasped her chubby hands together, and gazed bewildered at the lady.

But Lady Elizabeth, charmingly dressed in a pompadour silk sown with rosebuds, her face framed in wonderful old lace, her eyes a-twinkle, gave the lie to the heresy. It was impossible to look like a picture and not have a soul. Miss Black herself, whose bombazine betrayed her cruelly, had always been conscious of a soul, even when Janice mocked at her pretensions.

"A woman," Lady Elizabeth went on, "is the flesh sandwiched between the world and the devil."

"Surely, surely," Miss Black gasped, "woman — the embodiment of knowledge, courage, devotion — is not the flesh."

"No, my good Black, you are right. With those attributes a woman is the devil rather than the flesh. I speak from personal experience."

"There is no devil about Heriot," said Miss Black stoutly; "and she has knowledge and courage and devotion if any living being has."

"Heriot? Hm — ah — But then she is the shining exception. Have you ever seen courage and devotion united in any other womanly woman?"

"If I may speak without egoism —" Miss Black began, but Lady Elizabeth's crisp cackle interrupted her.

"To be sure — I had forgotten — Janice has told me of your devotion to your professor. Dear me, he must be a singularly dull person to exact it. But where is the courage?"

"It required courage for a spinster to recognise the snares of matrimony and to avoid them," said Miss Black with dignity.

"Ah, that reminds me," said Lady Elizabeth briskly. "Now that the girls are settled comfortably with me we need not detain you here. Your professor must be muttering maledictions on our heads for keeping you."

"On the contrary. He considers with me that it would express an indecent haste if we married so soon after his dear mother's decease. His allusions to funeral baked meats are very soothing. It is not as if we had really regretted the decease of his dear mother. The venerable lady had a rare merit of rendering herself unattractive — I don't know if you follow me. So few people know in life to temper their death to their survivors."

Lady Elizabeth's high heels tapped the floor impatiently. She had ceased to be amused at Miss Black's involved philosophy.

"It 's a very common merit," she said drily. "I may say you possess it in a marked degree. But about leaving us. These east winds are trying. You will avoid them by getting away at once."

Miss Black looked at her with a bland sympathy.

"The east winds are trying to old people. I don't wonder that you feel them; I should, at your age. But the girls and I are fresher for the bracing. Ah, Lady Elizabeth, we must be content in our years. You will even regret old age when it is gone."

Lady Elizabeth fastened her eyes on Miss Black with intention, but Miss Black only smiled back at her and nodded reassuringly. Finally Lady Elizabeth fell back in her chair laughing.

"Extremes touch," she said. "My cleverness has never done more than her foolishness."

But Miss Black was a bore. She could not escape her. Wherever Lady Elizabeth was, there was Miss Black also. Even her own morning-room offered no sanctuary. While Knight and the girls were out golfing or riding or tramping the moors, Miss Black sat in the morning-room with her interminable knitting, which was always getting into knots, and prosed on.

It added to Lady Elizabeth's exasperation that she had brought the infliction on herself. She had taken Miss Black to the room that she might talk

about her old lover, Sir Logan. In these months she had learned all that Miss Black could tell her; but neither hint nor plainest speech kept Miss Black from seeking her society.

"I wish to know when you propose to leave Scaurlets," she said sharply.

Miss Black poised a knitting needle in her hand and looked at her with an arch smile.

"That depends on our two young people. I shall stay until I give Janice into her husband's care. I promised dear Sir Logan to remain with her till she was married. I cannot break my promise—"

Lady Elizabeth snatched up a ball of wool and looked as if she would throw it at Miss Black. Instead she threw it at her own reflection in the mirror opposite.

"Sir Logan was an old fool, an old fool. He made hash of his own life, and now he makes hash of the child's. He made Janice promise to marry a person she had never seen. He made Logan promise to marry a girl who will lead him a dance. He made you promise to harry my leisure. Oh, great powers, and this is the man I have allowed to damn my whole life! Lord, lord, what fools women be!"

"Regret nothing that you have done," said Miss Black placidly. "Our only regret should be for what we leave undone. It was natural that dear Sir Logan should wish Janice to marry his heir. He did not wish his title and property to pass from his only surviving child. But the grave is no re-

specter of persons, and it is an open question if he considers these things now."

"You are sure it was the title and property?" Lady Elizabeth said queerly.

Miss Black was too short-sighted to see the curious look on her face, a look that gazed before to something undone and gazed after to something she wished undone. Her eyes looking deep into the past saw there what was not pretty.

"You are certain he would have left Janice free if Logan had not been his heir?" she said crossly.

"Quite, quite certain of it," said Miss Black earnestly. "I knew his whole mind in the talk we had together on the fatal evening. I must say I wish he had left Janice unbound. It would have been delightful if she had chosen for herself one of your charming and estimable sons; for though young Sir Logan is perfection, I think Mr. Catesby is very agreeable. You should have seen him with Janice on the yacht, a pair of happy, singing birds."

"Don't tell me Janice prefers Knight to Logan," said Lady Elizabeth, a sharp thrust in her voice.

Miss Black looked at her with great benevolence.

"Our loyal Janice will carry out her dear father's wishes, especially as Mr. Knight's affections are engaged elsewhere."

"Engaged elsewhere! You can't mean Heriot?"

Miss Black nodded and smiled. "From the first day they met."

"But —" The sentence was not finished. Lady

Elizabeth's brows wrinkled over her doubt. If this was true, then there was an end of the dilemma. The thing done need never be undone. The thing undone need never be done.

She smoothed out the silken rosebuds on her lap and her face cleared. How blind she had been! Of course, and of course! Was not Knight often alone with Heriot, seldom with Janice? If they walked out together it was always Janice ahead, Heriot with Knight. In the drawing-room the *tête-à-tête* was always Heriot and Knight, Knight and Heriot. What a fool she had been to imagine the other thing. On the very night of their arrival she remembered Knight had said he admired Heriot more than Janice. And he had grown very grave lately, as grave as Heriot. She had thought it was his anxiety for Logan, who was in the thick of the fighting, but anxiety for Logan did not altogether account for the change. He was sobering down to Heriot's gravity. Of course Miss Black was right!

"The fool sees further than the wise man," she laughed. "Well, thank goodness, I need n't develop a conscience at this late date. Still, I 'll find out for myself."

She was so relieved she could look amiably at Miss Black placidly dropping stitches and getting her wool into knots in her efforts to pick them up again. She could even tolerate the idea that Miss Black would be a fixture at Scaurlets until Janice was married.

She looked up smiling when the door opened and Janice dashed in.

The morning-room was a quaint room hung with Louis Quinze flowered silk and furnished with the spindly furniture of the same period. There were stiff-backed chairs upholstered in flowered silk; the cabinets were full of china. The dainty pinks and blues and lilacs were like the flowers in an old-world garden. It was the frame for the picture of the little old lady in the pompadour silk, with the wicked, bright eyes. She sat straight in her chair before a screen on which hung innumerable miniatures of Logan and Knight.

The miniatures began with the babies three months old and ended with Logan in soldier uniform and Knight in Highland dress. From every frame they regarded their mother with placid, satisfied eyes. Janice, bursting in with merry face and tumbled hair, made a wild havoc of life among the silent miniatures, routing their painted peace.

"Oh, here your are, dearest!" she cried breathlessly, kissing Lady Elizabeth. "What luck to find you. I 'm dull. I want you to amuse me."

Lady Elizabeth kissed her perfunctorily. Janice, absolutely irresponsible, always gay, always young, made her feel as if she were living over again her own girlhood. In her crooked fashion she loved the girl, and not less because Janice made no secret of her admiration for her prettiness and cynicism.

"Dull, Janice? Well, it must be dull for you,

ten miles from anywhere. I wish we had some sort of society for you. To be sure, at Craggan there 's the doctor and the lawyer and a pack of ministers. Shall we unloose the pack on Scaurlets?"

Janice made a grimace. "Unloose them on Heriot and Knight. They 've been in the chapel all the morning studying the sculptured stones. Who wants chapels and gravestones when the sun is on the moor and the wind is singing in the pines?"

"I expect the dead Catesbys are of your way of thinking," said Lady Elizabeth grimly. "We are all buried there — and married there too, for that matter. But where have you been all the morning?"

"I went to the dogs. Chief and I have had a glorious scamper on the moors. We climbed Black Tor and came across a beautiful shepherd full-length on the thyme, piping on a reed. That pleased me."

"You talked to him?"

"How could I? He has n't any English and I have n't any Gaelic. But I sat down beside him and listened to his piping."

"Madcap! When Logan comes back he won't let you run wild like this."

"Oh, Logan —" A cloud crossed Janice's face and was gone. "Any news?" she added, with a glance at the letters on the table.

"There 's been sharp fighting. He thinks the war will go on for months."

"That 's all right," said Janice briskly. She stretched her arms wide and let them drop again,

"When you write him tell him not to hurry. I like Scaurlets, and I like the moors that are all bog, and the people that have no English, and the heather and the myrtle, and the bannocks and the parritch. And I like running wild with the dogs and meeting beautiful shepherds on the banks of thyme piping while the sheep stray. Tell him there's always a sprig of yellow on the gorse; and to-day I found one little furry catkin. Tell him that the brown peat streams make me dream of nymphs and oreads."

"Why don't you tell him these things yourself?"

"It bores me to write letters."

She walked about the room, airily glancing first at one thing then at another. She stopped before the screen and studied the miniatures.

"They are such pretty, pretty babies, what a pity they ever grew up. Who would have thought that Logan was ever such a little round bunch of dimples and smiles? It is Logan, is n't it? They are so like I don't know which is Knight and which Logan."

Lady Elizabeth got up and stood beside her.

"No, that is Knight; he wears pink ribbons. He has n't the clear features of Logan. Look at the two together. You see there is a difference."

"I don't see any. They are exactly alike."

"So people said at the time, but I knew better. Logan was the prettier baby as he is the handsomer man."

"There's nothing to choose between them," Janice

maintained. "How I wish they were babies still. I 'd have loved them. They would have been more amusing than the dogs." She took one of the miniatures down from its hook on the screen and kissed it. "Did n't you adore them, dearest?"

"Not I, child. It was the greatest bore having twins; it complicated my maternal feelings. I would have loved one baby better."

"I suppose you all liked Logan best because he was the heir?"

"I liked him best because he was like your father," the lady snapped.

"Poor Knight! Poor little baby Knight!" Janice held the miniature close against her face.

"If you like them so much, child, I 'll give you one of each. I have duplicates of those first ones."

The colour rose slowly in the girl's face. "Ought I to have both?" she asked shyly.

"As you like. I can give you one and Heriot the other — Ah, here she comes! Heriot, would you like to have a miniature of Knight when he was a baby?"

"Ah, wait!" Janice cried eagerly. "I 'll prove that there 's no difference between the two. Heriot shall take the one she thinks is Knight. Choose, Heriot."

Heriot had paused in the doorway. There was no smile on her face; she looked pale and mournful and turned her eyes doubtfully from Janice to Lady Elizabeth.

"May I really have one? How charming they are!"

"You may have Knight," Lady Elizabeth said, in a high, piping voice. "Logan naturally belongs to Janice."

"Choose! Choose!" Janice ran to her, the two miniatures on her open palm. "They are both exactly alike, it does n't matter which you take."

Heriot studied the two faces a moment, while Janice and Miss Black and Lady Elizabeth watched her as if fate hung on her choice. At last she lifted one and held it up, but her eyes did not seek Janice's. She looked beyond her and beyond Lady Elizabeth.

"Blue ribbons!" Janice cried, in a glad, ringing voice, and danced round the room and kissed Lady Elizabeth, and danced back again and kissed Heriot. "Dear thing, you 've chosen blue ribbons."

"Sir Logan? She has chosen Sir Logan!" Miss Black exclaimed. "But that is all wrong. You will have to give him to Janice, Heriot."

Lady Elizabeth's sharp eyes were fastened on Heriot. She saw her hesitate an instant, she saw her fingers tighten round the frame.

"Shall we change, Janice?" Heriot asked, without enthusiasm.

"Not I!" Janice laughed. "I prefer pink ribbons to blue ones."

Heriot's face lightened, and Lady Elizabeth glancing from one contented face to the other set her lips in a tight line.

"Oh, oh!" she said to herself, "so that's how it is. My good Black you are a greater fool than I thought you." She reflected a moment, gave herself a decisive shake, and added, "Besides, at my age it would be too ridiculous to develop a conscience."

CHAPTER XIII

THE February day was already on the wane. The fishing boats had left the harbour and were dim ghosts on the horizon. Only the Seagull at anchor slept on the sleeping waves.

The little pier was deserted too. The men that lounged there, pipe in mouth, had seen the fishing fleet start and had lounged home. Knight arranged the cushions in the boat, saw to the rudder lines, stood up, and held out his hand.

Janice hesitated on the harbour steps.

"Heriot wanted to come and I would n't let her," she said, frowning. "I told her that I wanted to be alone. Don't you understand that I want to go alone?"

"Impossible. You don't know the currents well enough. The coast is dangerous."

She tapped her foot lightly, and her gaze wandered past him.

"Besides," he went on, "it grows dark very soon. We have time only for a short spin."

"The voice is Knight's," she said, still looking past him; "but the tyranny is the tyranny of Logan."

"Even so," he answered coolly, though he winced.

She stepped into the boat in a leisurely manner, disdaining the hand held out.

"The moon will rise when the sun sets — and I like the dark."

"I don't — and the moon is new."

He waited until she settled herself among the red cushions, then took the oars, and went slowly by the Seagull.

"You are not wise to keep her here all winter," he said, nodding at the yacht. "She would be better berthed at Oban."

"I don't want to burn my ships," she said. "At any moment Blackie and I might want to go back to Italy."

"You can't want to go away till Logan comes, surely?"

"I mean when Logan comes," she said.

Knight rowed in silence for several minutes.

"She is a beautiful thing," he said suddenly. "Have you ever thought of selling her?"

"Sell her? Sell the Seagull!—Daddy's last gift?"

"I did n't think you 'd want to. But if you did I might find a purchaser."

"Yourself?"

He looked guilty. "I had a feeling I would n't like her to go to strangers."

"That all? I thought perhaps you wanted to escape too — when Logan comes."

"That too. When Logan comes I shall not be wanted any more."

Janice's heart dropped. She realised suddenly what Scaurlets would be without Knight. No gay

comrade on the moors, no friendly person ready to do her bidding, no Knight at beck and call morning, noon, or evening. It would be impossible to marry Logan if Knight went away.

"You are steering very badly," said Knight. "You don't seem to know whether you want to go to the right or to the left."

"There 's no right and no left in one's kingdom. Is n't the sea mine? Ah! how glad I am that the sea is always at Scaurlets. That, at least, will not fail me!"

"A treacherous friend, Janice."

"Do you call it treacherous? How lonely and sad it is; not a solitary thing is in sight — only the rock out there."

"That is Chern Island. I must take you there some day. It is very wild — nothing but rock and weed and seabirds and great swelling waves, and winds singing round it."

Janice leaned forward, her eyes waking. She forgot to be vexed that she was not alone.

"That is what I want!" she cried. "I 've wanted it all day, the song of the winds and the roar of the waves. I 've been restless for them all this dreary day. How I hate this quiet, grey sea! Oh, I want the wind and the waves. Scaurlets is terrible — like a prison. Let us go where the winds sweep and the waves dash."

"Not to-day, the island is two miles off. We could n't get back before dark."

"What does the dark matter, so long as I break away from Scaurlets? Ah! why did I come with you? Everything, everybody, bores me to-day."

"I am sorry we bore you."

He stopped rowing and considered. "If I row hard we might get there — "

"You don't bore me now," she said quickly, settling back on the cushions. "If you take me there you won't bore me at all. Now don't talk. Row for all you are worth. I 'm pleased with you."

"You are a baby," he said, "a spoiled baby." But he smiled because she was pleased with him.

He bent to the oars, aware of the vivid face and the bright curls set against the red cushions; the eyes, holding the pain of the sea, the mystery of the wind, gazing beyond and beyond him.

He could look his fill. She had forgotten him already; he had no part in her charmed dream.

"Is this your boat?" she asked abruptly.

"Practically. Logan never uses it. He does n't care for the sea."

He wondered why his answer set her frowning again, drove her back into a sullen quiet.

"Everything at Scaurlets is Logan's," he said. "I am a beggar on his bounty."

She did not answer, and watching her face furtively, he fell into silence too.

When the shadow of the rock deepened the deep green of the waves, he rested on his oars.

"The sea is rough enough here, you see, Janice.

And look at the innumerable white wings swirling round the rock."

She started up, leaned forward, and clapped her hands.

"What wings! what wings! Like living spray breaking on the rock. But the winds? I don't feel the winds."

"You would on the island itself. Here we are sheltered."

"Let me land," she commanded. "I want to stand among them. I want to feel the rush and tumult of them."

He shook his head. "No time. I 'm sorry."

"A minute only?" she coaxed. "Really, Knight, you 'd please me very much. I only want one minute to feel myself a bird in the wind."

He looked at her ruefully. "You 'd make a fellow perjure his very soul. A minute only then. But I must get round to the other side."

Where the rock rose less steeply from the sea he ran the boat in between the shelving slabs, and Janice clambered out on the seaweed that the tide had left sodden, and clambered up till she reached level ground. He knotted the rope round a jutting stone and followed her.

She had taken off her hat and stood, her curls blown away from her face, her lips parted, drinking in the wind that went to her brain like wine.

"It was a pity you cut off your hair," he said very unexpectedly.

"Yes, was n't it? And all for no use."

"What made you do it?"

"I wanted to prevent Logan from — from — from thinking me prettier than Heriot."

"You are prettier than Heriot," he said, reflecting, "but not as beautiful."

"I know." She turned to him with a wistful question. "You have always thought her more beautiful?"

"There can't be two opinions about it," he said simply, "but —" He stopped himself in time. He had no right to tell her that while Heriot was more beautiful it was she who was soft and winsome and infinitely lovable. He steeled his heart against the wistful eyes as he had steeled himself these three months against her winningness.

Janice drew a long breath. "Heriot is perfect," she said slowly. "If I were a man I would choose her from all the world to love and trust in. She is truth itself."

"I am sure of that," he said.

He moved away from her to the edge of the rock and looked down where the cliff sheered steeply up from the sea.

"See, there 's a gull caught on the ledge down there! How it flutters; but it can't free itself. When the tide comes in it will be covered. Poor gull! ironic to die like that."

Janice ran to the edge and peered over.

"Ah! the poor heart! But the rock is not very steep. I can climb down."

His fierce clutch caught her back. "Do you want to kill yourself?" he said roughly. "Madness to climb down!"

"But we can't leave it to die!" she said indignantly. "There must be some way of helping it. Of course we must save it."

"I might get round by the other side," he said doubtfully. "You promise to wait here if I go?"

"Yes! yes!" she stamped her foot in her impatience. "Only go! don't waste time! What a good thing we came to-day. Now you 'll save the pretty thing."

But it seemed to her hours before she saw him again on the shelf below, clinging to the side of the rock, creeping stealthily from narrow ledge to narrow ledge. How dangerous it looked. She held her breath.

The waves pounded on the rock, and with the crash of each roller her heart shook. Surely the crash must cast him down from his perch. The gulls wheeled about her screaming, but she did not hear them for the terror in her. Would he ever come back? Would he ever come back? Suppose he never came back? Her eyes lost him; everything, sea and sky and rock, was swathed in whirling blackness.

When the giddiness passed she saw that he was creeping back again. The ledge where the bird had been was empty. How slowly the minutes passed before she heard his footsteps on the rock. She

could not move to meet him, but she saw that the bird he carried was dead.

"I need n't have gone," he said. "The poor thing died before I got to it. Some one had shot it, see, — and — Why, Janice, what is the matter?"

For she had taken his hand and was looking up at him through rushing tears.

"Goose, were you so frightened?" He smiled down at her.

"Frightened! Oh, I thought you would never come back!" She lifted his hand and pressed it caressingly against her cheek.

"Don't! don't!" he said sharply, and drew his hand away.

His tone was the lunge of a blade at her heart, but she forced a mischievous smile.

"How frightened you look! I won't do it again. And the poor pretty bird is dead? So many poor pretty things have to die." She lifted it from the rock where it had fallen, swung it high, and watched it till it splashed on the wave. "From the great deep to the great deep," she said softly. She turned again to Knight. "How quickly it grows dark. Still, there 's light enough to take us home."

"We must go at once," he said, a cold constraint in his voice. He swung on ahead, and she saw the constraint in the set of his shoulders also.

"Knight, wait for me. I can't go so fast," she cried.

He took no notice of her; he dared not turn his face lest she should see how moved he was. He strode on, his feet slipping on the weed.

The crack, crack, of the seaweeds he crushed was like the firing of distant guns. He told himself sternly that Logan was in action and he must not play the traitor to him, not even though Janice loved him.

And the next moment he had forgotten his own treacherous heart, for he had reached the place where they had landed and — God in Heaven! the boat was gone. The boat was gone!

He looked, and once more looked, and looked again. This was the place, but the shelving slabs were covered in the sea. The seaweed on which Janice had walked made a floating green mosaic on the waves. The tide had come in, and the boat, lifted and freed, had been carried round by the current and away from the island. He could not even see it, for the sea was swathed in mist.

Knight remembered that no one had been down at the harbour when they started, and his face changed. But he went back to meet Janice, whistling a few sprightly bars.

"Here's a bad business, Janice. The boat has gone."

"Gone? How? When? The boat gone?"

"Lifted by the tide. I did n't know we 'd been so long getting that confounded bird. What a fool I 've been!"

"Both of us," said Janice promptly. "And now?"

"We 'll have to take the chance of a boat passing. And in this mist the odds are they won't see us."

"Hm! Rather desperate."

"Desperate?" he fumed. "You 'll take cold, be hungry, Heaven only knows what you 'll suffer because I 've been a confounded idiot."

He raged up and down, Janice watching him with a humorous eye. She welcomed the disaster that had made him forget his constraint.

"I suppose we must make the best of it," he said.

"Naturally," she answered brightly. "Don't be wretched about me. I love to be here among the winds."

"The mist will soak you, and there 's no shelter."

She laughed. "Let us try the other side of the rock."

But when they reached the other side there was no shelter.

Janice looked at Knight and laughed again, but he bit his moustache and swore under his breath.

The gulls screamed round their heads and the waves beat at their feet. Not a sound of passing oars reached them. The mist blotted out the distance and the night crept so close they could not see each other's face.

"Bah!" said Janice. "The situation becomes monotonous. I 'm going to walk up and down. My hands are ice."

"Let me warm them for you."

He took her hands in his and rubbed warmth into them, but the life that rioted in him at the touch of her frightened him. How could he share darkness and cold and danger with her and not betray his love? How could he see her suffer and maintain his casual friendliness? He knew she cared for him. Would his loyalty to Logan stand the strain of the long cheerless hours with their irresistible appeal to his tenderness? His thoughts made his face like iron.

When another hour had passed and silence heavy as the night had fallen between them, Knight roused himself.

"Look here, Janice, we can't stay here all night. I'm leaving you my coat. Put it on. It will keep you warm till I get back."

"Are you going to fly away on the back of a seagull?" she asked ironically.

"No, to swim across. I may pick up the boat again. Anyway, it's the only thing to be done."

"In this darkness! Are you mad?"

"I've done it before."

"But in daylight. Don't be absurd, please. I'd rather stay here a hundred nights than let you do it."

He drew a deep breath. "It's no use, Janice. I have to go."

She caught at his arm. "Ah, Knight, don't, don't! It's to kill yourself."

"Nonsense! I'll be back before you miss me."

He loosened her hand, but she caught his and held it.

"I beg you not to!" she said in a low voice. "I beg you to stay for my sake."

"I must go for my own sake."

His voice was cold and hard. She could not see his face moved to a great pity, a great tenderness, a great renunciation. She only knew that she loved him and that he was risking his life for her sake. In a summer sea he might swim to shore, but in that bitter cold and the night unlighted — She heard the dash of the strong waves on the rock, and fear beat with great strokes on her heart. It had been terrible to watch him creeping on the cliff, but how infinitely more terrible it would be to wait there in the darkness, not knowing if he would ever come back to her.

She put her hands on his shoulders and lifted a pleading face. "Dear, if you love me you won't go."

It was as if her words had lifted a shield between herself and his love for her and she stood safeguarded against his man's weakness.

"But, you see, Janice, I am not Logan, and — I — can't — love — you."

He wrung the words out one by one, and each fell with a stroke that stunned the girl's heart.

"Then, Knight," she lifted her head with a superb defiance, "you will stay because *I* love *you*."

"God forbid," he said hoarsely, and he took her hands from his shoulders and put her from him.

At the moment the mist lifted, there was a gleam of stars, they saw the slight sickle of the moon. In the light the girl's face showed livid, like a dead face.

"Good!" said Knight, in a voice he tried to make careless. "Now you can watch the stars and fancy you are Logan watching the camp-fires, and thinking of us all, and dreaming of coming back to his sweetheart. Here's my coat, see, and my watch. I'll get rid of my boots lower down."

She drew her breath sharply, and her eyes fought to tear away the mask that hid his heart from her, but not a line of his face yielded. He gave her back her look with a smile, waved his hand with a light "By-by, Janice!" and was gone. Janice made no movement to prevent him. She stood proud and silent and watched him go.

She had thought, — in spite of everything, — she had thought Knight loved her. She had hoped that something would happen to save her from marrying Logan; now it did n't matter whether she married Logan or not.

"But, you see, Janice, I can't love you."

Something had gone out of her life; she felt an empty ache where before there had been a bursting life. She did not care now what happened to her. She confronted love's denial.

She stood there, her face lifted to the wind, the sea sobbing below her, the night wrapped round her, and she lifted up her heart in scorn of its weakness.

What was love or love's denial to her who was a child of the storm and the wind? The night would always be hers, and the silence and the peace of the stars. And the love of man was nothing beside the wonderful love of the sea. O Love, where is thy sting? O Heart, where is thy victory?

A splash into the water and the sound of steady strokes on it set her shivering. She too felt the shock of the icy water.

The cold braced Knight. On the rock he had been crippled and irresolute. In the sea he was whole again, free to fight for his honour and his love, and the safety of the woman who was more than love to him. He lifted his head and a laugh of triumph broke from him.

He swam on and on, his will set to conquer death itself. When he rose on the great waves the lights of Scaurlets were before him; when he sank in the great waves the stars were still above him. The ice of the winter sea crept to his bones. He tightened his lips and told himself his arms should not fail him till he had served Janice.

But the cold froze even his will. The thunder of the water in his ears stunned his senses. He seemed to hear words in the thunder. "From the great deep to the great deep."

He wondered with a vague wonder if he were going from the great deep of love to the great deep of death — from the great deep of life to the great deep of love. Better to die then, true to his

brother, true to his honour, than to live to betray both. Better to die then than to see Janice Logan's wife.

The waters parted and met over his head. He rose again to the surface, and life struggled in him. He remembered that he must fight for Janice and Logan. He remembered that he must fight for Logan.

His arms struck out again. The flash of stars over, under, round him, blinded his eyes. His cry for help went ringing out on the night.

CHAPTER XIV

SCAURLETS had been roused violently from its winter quiet; the news that Logan had been wounded had come at the moment when Knight's life hung in the balance. But now all was peace again. Janice could be heard in the house singing, and if her song had changed its merry note, what wonder after the news that Logan was in great suffering, though not in danger. What wonder after those days of anxiety for Knight's life?

The men on the Seagull had seen the empty boat floating in on the tide and had guessed the truth and set off in the dingey to see if their young lady had been left on the rock. It was their light searching the sea that had flashed into Knight's eyes. They had heard his cry and taken him into the boat, where he had barely strength to tell them of Janice's danger before lapsing into unconsciousness.

For days his life had seemed forfeited to his exposure in the sea; but youth and strength had saved him.

To-day he was on the sofa in the drawing-room, and his mother could leave him with Janice and Miss Black while she walked with Heriot in the garden.

Lady Elizabeth's face wore a crooked smile. She confronted the conscience she thought she had rid herself of thirty years ago. Knight's danger had established her theory. It was not Heriot who loved him; though Heriot was always at hand ready to help, while Janice had gone away by herself, apparently not in sympathy with the anxiety in the house.

"She is an ungrateful little toad," Lady Elizabeth had said to herself, until going into the chapel she had found Janice kneeling at the altar sobbing out passionate promises to marry Logan, to sacrifice everything — everything, if only Knight lived. Lady Elizabeth had tiptoed out of the chapel with a grey, grim face.

And now Knight was out of danger, and because Janice showed no desire to see him, Lady Elizabeth had sent her to sing to him while she took the air with Heriot.

"The garden in winter," she was saying, "is the woman waiting for love."

"But you said women could n't love," Heriot objected.

"They can't; but they all wait for it. If they don't believe in love they 'd have nothing to believe in."

"Themselves," said Heriot.

Lady Elizabeth struck the gravel with her stick.

"A woman's greatest foe is herself. Her strongest instincts rise up and curse her. The woman in

each of us is the traitor at the gate ready to give the city to the enemy."

"I love the garden in winter," Heriot said.

Her eyes wandered slowly about it. Bare boughs were stencilled delicately against the grey glimmer of the twilight. Bare vines wandered desolate by trellis and arbour; bare branches held empty hands to the deserted sky. The lawns were grey and sodden, the box-bordered beds bitten by frost. Could these chill alleys ever be the home of flower and song?

She looked into her heart and the garden there was wrapped in winter. Bare, too, but for the thought of Janice that made living green about a fountain.

"Women have no honour" — Lady Elizabeth refused to be diverted from her subject; "they steal each other's lovers. You may edge him with broken glass, you may fence him with barbed wire, but if another woman wants him, though she cut her hands and tear her Liberty frocks, be sure she 'll steal him."

"Only if he wishes to be stolen."

"My dear, men all wish to be stolen. Put a man in a garden and the first thing he does is to look over the hedge. He knows there is always a woman on the other side."

"I don't think you have met many nice women," said Heriot.

"There must be a great many nice ones somewhere, I 've met so few," Lady Elizabeth chuckled.

She tucked the girl's arm through hers and her keen little eyes twinkled.

"I know a young woman, Heriot, who is such an honourable fool she won't let the sun into her garden lest the roses should n't bloom in another woman's garden."

"But, Lady Elizabeth —" The girl met her quizzical glance with puzzled eyes. The old lady nodded at her.

"An honourable fool, Heriot! What! you are not to have a springtime — no violets, no daffodils, no golden showers, no lad's love — nothing but bare branches because somebody else has a garden to sun? Bah! bah! be sure there 's sun enough for other gardens whether you let the sun into yours or not."

"I don't understand," said Heriot gravely.

"Oh yes, you do. Your eyes are n't so stupid. You know I want you for my daughter. What 's the use of having sons if I can't choose wives for them?"

Heriot drew herself away. "Are n't we plotting against Janice?" she asked coldly.

"Tut! Janice can't marry them both. And you — do you want to be an old maid that you show so demure, so chill, so virginly? Why don't you dance? Why don't you sing? Why don't you laugh? You have a pretty wit, but it is Janice that is always sprightly. When you are with me you are charming; with the others you are colourless. Do you think that grave and austere beauty of yours,

even if taken at the flood, will lead man on to marriage?"

Heriot listened, amused against her will.

"Dear Lady Elizabeth, I'm not one of those women who think that marriage is the only thing in life. Love, yes; and one can find love wherever one goes."

"Bah! too soon for you to talk spinstersophy. That sort of thing is the consolation of the forties. Twenty-five may look on marriage and still think it is good. Tut! tut! those eyes of yours haven't seen the sour grapes."

"They may never see love," Heriot smiled.

"Who is talking about love, goose? My discourse is of marriage, a totally different thing."

"Aren't the terms interchangeable?"

"Hear her simplicity! Love is illusion, man delusion, marriage collusion, and woman —"

"Confusion?" Heriot finished, smiling again.

"Well, we are born to be confounded, as the sparks fly upward."

"I have no temptation to be confounded, you see."

"No, confound you! And unless you put yourself into the way of temptation you'll never be tempted. Do you mean to tell me you have never met a man you could marry?"

All the colour faded slowly out of Heriot's face. She was silent a while. Then she lifted her head and looked at Lady Elizabeth with steady eyes.

"Yes, once. He was engaged to my friend. It's

a very short story, you see, Lady Elizabeth. It would scarcely make a one-volume novel."

"A woman's story is always in one volume. The other books are padding. It strikes me your short story is chapter one of a problem novel."

"No," Heriot said. "I respect my Liberty frocks, and I dislike cut fingers."

"I am disappointed in you, you solemn chit. I've been planning the book of your life and Knight's, and here you close it at chapter one."

"Knight!" Heriot exclaimed, starting.

"Yes, to be sure! And why not Knight? What have you against him?"

"I thought — I thought you meant Logan," said Heriot simply.

"Logan is engaged to marry Janice," said Lady Elizabeth, and walked on smartly. It was no comfort to her to have succeeded in running Heriot's secret to ground.

Heriot followed slowly. It seemed to her that night had fallen very suddenly on sea and land. She looked across the parapet and saw the sea shrouded in evening. She heard the oncoming steps of the tide. She looked within herself and heard the steps of a tide that would lift her life to its highest fortune; and beyond the sound of its coming she heard the sound of its going. Love gave and love took away, and in the giving and the taking was the life of her soul.

They were under the windows of the drawing-

room. Both stopped to listen to the singing that plaintively thrilled the silence.

> "I have desired to go
> Where springs not fail.
> To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail,
> And a few lilies blow.
>
> "And I have asked to be
> Where no storms come,
> Where the green swell is in the haven dumb,
> And out of the swing of the sea."

Heriot forgot her self-betrayal and turned with troubled eyes to Lady Elizabeth.

"That is not Janice — Janice who is always for the storm and the wind. What makes her sing my song?"

"What makes her do anything?" Lady Elizabeth said irritably. In this moment she had caught sight of the hatchet with which she intended to kill that inconvenient conscience.

"She is the knot in the web I 've been spinning. Oh yes, I am that despicable person, the match-making mother. I had my boys well matched, and you girls are against me. Poor Knight! poor boy! nobody wants him, it seems. It 's hard on him to be the henchman while Logan feasts at full board."

"Is n't it natural that Knight should take the lower place? He is so inferior."

Lady Elizabeth swung round on her with flashing eyes.

"If there's more brain in Logan there's more heart in Knight. If the one is a stern high-handed scholar, the other is a fine high-minded gentleman. If the one would never forgive an injury to himself, the other would never do an injury to another. If the one would go hot-foot to his duty, the other would find his duty walking with him. The one holds all he can grasp, the other holds nothing he can give. There you have my boys, and they are both fine fellows." She paused, then added with intended unexpectedness, "And I wish from the bottom of my heart it was you and not Janice to marry Logan."

"Not Janice!" Heriot faltered, shrinking.

"Not Janice," Lady Elizabeth repeated; "she is too proud and headstrong for him. He is too stern a tyrant for her. You would have suited Logan better, your strength is reasonable to match his. Janice would have been happier with Knight —"

All at once Lady Elizabeth stopped and stamped her foot. This was not what she had intended to say. She had meant to turn Heriot's thoughts to Knight, and she had only pleaded Janice's case. "You are a fool," she addressed herself, "a weak and drivelling old fool, and if you have a conscience to reckon with it's your own blame." She smiled whimsically at Heriot. "Come, let us go in. The day has nothing to give us but mist and mystification."

Heriot walked slowly into the house, her thoughts as heavy as her feet.

It had been her happiness that Janice would be safe with Logan, but "stern and tyrannical"? How could Janice be happy with him if he hung chains about her merry heart? "She would be happier with Knight." Heriot pondered over Knight's attitude towards Janice; kind it was, and friendly and frank, but she had never caught sight of the lover in him.

"You would have suited Logan better." Ah yes! how proud she would be of his strength! His tyranny would be her crown. She would wear her chains with a merry heart.

She went into her room and stood gazing out wistfully at the grey, still sea and the Seagull etched against the grey wall of mist. If only she were on the yacht again, sailing away and away with Janice from the problems of Scaurlets. If only she could escape from the haunting dread lest the marriage Sir Logan had arranged should be the ruin of his child's life.

Suddenly another thought came. She remembered the unaccountable change in Lady Elizabeth's tone, the frankness that had been too frank, and she thought she saw the meaning of it all.

All that Lady Elizabeth had said had been so much barbed wire set round Logan that Heriot might not steal Janice's lover.

Well, Lady Elizabeth need not have been afraid, Heriot said proudly to herself. Janice's happiness was more to her than any happiness of her own.

She sat there till the room grew dark and the fire was like a sullen red eye watching her. At last she got up, her face strong in the wan glow. Her lips moved over quiet words.

> "And I have asked to be
> Where no storms come,
> Where the green swell is in the haven dumb,
> And out of the swing of the sea."

A great tenderness was in her heart. She went back to seek Janice.

There were voices in the drawing-room. She opened the door. Janice was alone with Knight, standing with drooping head near to his couch.

"I have forgotten everything that happened that night," he was saying, "and so, please God, have you."

CHAPTER XV

SPRING had come to Scaurlets. There was a stir on the moors where the heather wore its young green, and in the bogs where the new leaves of the myrtle matched the new brightness of the moss. All the pines shook out fresh tassels, and the fir branches were edged with dainty fringes. The gorse buds were bursting with the pomp of their cloth of gold, and the broom fenced its hidden hoard with new green needles.

Everywhere was the smell of peat and the close fragrance of the woods. Everywhere was the voice of merry brown waters tumbling to the sea. Everywhere was the note of the lark soaring to the sun.

There was a subtle life on all the hills, a tremor and an awakening, though the island was still opal at sunrise and ruby at sunset and noon kept the secret of their silence. Where the sheep pastured, flecks of white showed newly dropped lambs; and Janice's beautiful shepherd left his flock to his collie and slept all day on the thyme because of wakeful nights.

Spring had come to the sea also, and a fairy blossoming of purple and blue and green and amber

painted its garden of waves. When the tide came in it threw a mantle of speedwell blue over the crisped sand and the many tinted rocks. When the tide went out the seaweed spread a wonderful saffron carpet over shore and rock.

Janice had never seen such colouring. She did not miss, as she had thought she would, the silver flashing of olives, the purpling of anemones, the riot of roses of the Italian spring. This enchanted island set in the northern sea was a dream of magic.

She loved the wide spaces of the moors, the lonely reaches of the hills, the shifting lights of the sea. She threw down the burden of the future and took the laughing present to her heart.

Logan was away and his wound would keep him in hospital indefinitely. Knight was always ready to serve her; the women were friends who united to spoil her. Spring had come and she was still free. She could rejoice in her youth. The evil days might come, and the days with no pleasure in them. What of it? She would drink her fill of the spring.

They called her Tomboy. Miss Black scolded; Lady Elizabeth was sarcastic; Heriot coaxed; Knight remonstrated. What was the good of it all?

Morning, noon, and evening she was singing on the moors, wandering over the hills, the great hound Chief her faithful companion. She made friends of the shepherds and shared their lunch of milk and oatcake and came home ravenous to tea. If she was not on the moors they knew she was in the pine-

woods or on the sea. When the spring in her blood made her restless she rowed herself to Chern Island and spent the day among the birds and the winds. For days after she would be quiet and wistful, her old self again, Janice of the laugh and the sad eyes.

Lady Elizabeth felt herself young once more beside Janice. The two were great comrades. Janice loved Lady Elizabeth's stories of her father's youth. She loved the story of their ill-fated love; how Lady Elizabeth had lived her life with her husband, and another dream-life with the man she had loved and lost.

Janice did not weigh the wrong or the right of it. It fascinated her to watch Lady Elizabeth's cynical content with what life had given her. She felt something leap in her in sympathy with the lady's dark saying: —

"Woman was made for motherhood. Compared with motherhood wifehood is as water unto wine. My babies, not my husband, were your father's real rivals. And it 's curious that he should have been their enemy."

"He thought the world of Logan," Janice was quick to answer.

"He never knew how he had wronged him." Lady Elizabeth's lips tightened.

If Heriot had known of these talks she would have doubted Lady Elizabeth's wisdom; but Janice never told her of them. The subject of Logan had become a barrier between them. Heriot could not speak of

him, and Janice would not; so the two girls spoke of everything but the subject that touched them closest.

Lady Elizabeth might not be wise, but she spoke with intention.

If Logan meant to marry Janice he would marry her, and the best thing for the girl would be to set Knight on the plane of the dream-lover, remote and inaccessible.

But it was after these talks that Janice would slip away and spend the day alone on Chern Island. It was tonic for her to remember the thing that Knight had bidden her forget. The fear of Logan's return was a very slight matter beside the terror of the knowledge that Knight had no love for her. The knowledge frightened her, but it gave her a certain rest. Knowing that Knight did not love her, it would be easier for her to keep her promise to her father.

Sometimes, even, it seemed to matter little that Knight did not love her. She could sing and taste the zest of the days with all her old abandon of gladness. Chasing the spring on the moors, love seemed to lose significance and become a thing apart from her life. "As long as I have the woods and the moors and the sea I can never be unhappy at Scaurlets, not even though I 'm married to Logan," she told herself.

One day she did not as usual burst into the hall at tea-time with the rush of a blast from the moors.

The others had finished their tea, and the scones Knight had jealously guarded through the meal remained untouched.

Miss Black surmised inconsequently on her absence. Knight said nothing, but his eyes wandered from the door to the clock, from the clock to the door.

"It's too late for that child to be out alone," Lady Elizabeth said; "one of these days she will get lost. Knight, I thought Logan gave her into your charge? You don't seem to feel your responsibility."

He got up and pushed his chair back with a clatter.

"I can scarcely force my society on Janice, mother. She tells one quite frankly she wishes to be alone."

"That's because she sees that you and Heriot are happier without her. But Logan will blame you if harm comes to her."

Knight bit back the words on his lips. "She has Chief with her, so she is safe," he said with restraint.

"Well, it's six o'clock, and quite dark. If none of you think it necessary to look for her, I do."

Speaking very crossly, Lady Elizabeth rose.

"Janice can't come to any harm," Heriot said quietly; "but of course I'll go with you, Lady Elizabeth."

"Don't trouble yourselves; I'll go," said Knight.

He moved to the door in a leisurely fashion, but

his mother brushed past him impatiently, snatched a plaid from the rack, and opened the great door.

"Here she is!" she screamed, as the light flooded out on Janice slowly mounting the steps carrying a white bundle.

She came into the hall, and they all exclaimed at the ragged and ghastly Janice who smiled pitifully at them.

"Take it, please; my arms are breaking."

Heriot ran forward and took from her a young lamb half dead, its fleece reddened with blood. Janice dropped into a chair and hid her arms in the skirts of her dress and leaned back breathless.

"What, in the name of St. Christopher!" screamed Lady Elizabeth.

Janice opened her eyes wearily. "It 's not dead. Give it some hot milk."

"She is covered with blood," said Knight, in a quick, alarmed voice. "Janice, what has happened?"

"I fought with a dog on the Black Tor," she said. "He seemed lost and starving. He had carried off the lamb and would have killed it. The awful thing is — he killed poor Chief." Her lips trembled. "Poor beautiful Chief; he died defending me — dear Chief —"

"Oh my God!" Knight cried. He stooped and lifted the arm she was hiding. "He bit you! the dog bit you! He did this!"

He showed the arm, torn and bleeding.

"I had to get the lamb away —" She closed

her eyes and tears forced themselves slowly through the lids.

Knight was examining the wound, while the white-faced women pressed around them with anxious questions.

"Water," he said quickly; "basin — bandages."

Heriot threw the lamb into Miss Black's arms and flew from the room. Lady Elizabeth stood by grimly and said not a word when she saw Knight kneel down beside Janice and set his lips to the wound to suck it.

But Janice snatched her arm away. "No, no! He may have been mad."

"There are no mad dogs on Craggan," said Knight quietly. "Be quiet, dear, this has to be done."

She closed her eyes again and did not open them till he had finished and, the arm being washed and bandaged, he rose to his feet.

"Mother, you will take care of her?" he said, a world of tenderness in the commonplace words.

Janice looked up and caught an expression in his eyes that sent the blood swinging through her veins. Lady Elizabeth saw it, too, and her heart stood still.

"What are you going to do?" she cried, seeing Knight reach down a gun from the rack.

"Find that dog," he answered, and was at the door before Janice struggled up with a dismayed cry.

"Oh, Knight, don't go! He was as fierce as a wolf."

He looked round, smiled, waved his hand, and ran down the steps.

"Is anyone seeing to the lamb?" Janice asked brokenly. She fell back in the chair, and they saw that she had fainted.

CHAPTER XVI

"YOU happy, happy lamb to be alive at all!" Janice sang, and tucked up her skirts and ran down the garden, the lamb at her heels. She was so happy she had to sing and run. She had it in her to leap the prim borders, to climb the trees, to be the very tomboy they called her; for it was June, and the sun was busy in the garden.

The beds were a tangle of blossom; all the green alleys were decked with banners. The rhododendrons, crimson and white and rose and purple, flamed from their dusky leaves. Lilac lifted white nosegays, laburnum flung golden showers, guelder-roses tossed snowy balls, even the laurestinas bushes brought innumerable rosy stars to deck the morning.

"Was ever anything half so sweet,

> "When nothing that asks for bliss
> Asking aright is denied;
> And half of the world a bridegroom is,
> And half of the world a bride?"

sang Janice. Her heart was in the June festa. Winter was over and gone; the time of the singing of birds had come to her.

She did not try to analyse her happiness. She only knew that spring had waked on the day when she had rescued the lamb and brought it home.

How many wonderful things had come to her since that day, and because of that day. She did not know that Lady Elizabeth had prescribed her cruise on the Seagull because they feared the dog Knight had killed had been mad. She only knew that for a whole golden month she and Lady Elizabeth and Knight had sailed among the magic islands of the north. She only knew that in that month she had found again the old Knight of the voyage from Genoa, her frank comrade who did not avoid her any more, in whose eyes she might sometimes surprise a look that made her heart sing.

Heriot had chosen to remain at Scaurlets with Miss Black, and if Lady Elizabeth honoured her profession of chaperon more in the breach than in the observance, it was not Janice who noticed it.

Knight had set himself the task of diverting the girl's thoughts from her adventure with the dog, and had succeeded. Janice had no leisure for brooding on unpleasant things. He filled her day with cheerful comradeship.

Lying in her chair with half-closed eyes, Lady Elizabeth watched the gay little drama, weighed it and did not find it wanting in the elements of pity and terror. Her sin of the past had a part in the play. Night and day its shadow was on the stage, and its eyes looked at her with the doomed eyes of Janice!

She could not escape their pleading; she knew that sooner or later they would compel her to give up the secret she had meant to carry with her to the grave.

She would have to give it up soon now, for Logan was coming home. She had told no one that he was coming. Janice should gather her roses while she might.

So Janice had sailed among the islands of dreams till June blossomed, and they came back to find the towers of Scaurlets rising from an enchanted garden.

The lamb was poking a pink nose among the daisies and sneezing when the grass pollen tickled it. Janice caught up the little person, threw him across her shoulders, and pranced along singing: —

> "Ride a cock-horse
> To Banbury Cross
> To see an old woman mount a white horse."

"You baby, Janice! You ridiculous baby!"

She turned at Lady Elizabeth's piping voice.

"Oh!" she gasped, "you wonder! You exquisite wonder! the Lady Primavera itself! If only I were Botticelli to paint you!" She set down the lamb and ran and threw her arms around the dainty figure.

Lady Elizabeth's gown was all a soft glimmer of green flecked with Mayblossom. The skirt held high showed a full under petticoat of paler green, green stockings with white clocks, high-heeled shoes of white silk sewn with Maybuds.

"But why?" Janice asked. "This is not a festa!"

"*Chi lo sa?*" The lady shrugged her sloping silk shoulders. "You seem to be making festa."

"I am happy, dearest; wilfully, blissfully happy."

"Strange child. Happy so soon. Yet you loved your father?"

"Dearly, dearly," said Janice. She bent her eyes on Lady Elizabeth, and they were soft with remembrance. "I don't feel that I have lost him; I think of him always, and he seems near to me. And lately, it has been different — as if he had lifted some load off me. And then when I am with you he seems to be nearer still; you loved him so."

"You are a sentimentalist," said the lady. "I despise sentiment; my whole life has been the prey of it. I wonder now if you could do what you knew was wrong out of a sentimental fondness for your father?"

Janice thought a moment, and her face grew still.

"I should do it," she said slowly, "even if it seemed wrong to me; because if Daddy thought it right, it would be right."

"You are hopeless!" Lady Elizabeth swung round and stamped away. Her stick beat the gravel spitefully.

Janice gazed after her. The glory had departed from the day. The lamb looked up at her and bleated plaintively. She sat down on the grass, gathered it in her arms, and hid her face in its wool.

When Lady Elizabeth had watched her for ten minutes and still she did not move, the lady stumped back along the path and poked her with her stick.

"You said you were happy here, child."

Janice started and showed a mouth as mournful as her eyes.

"I am happy here, dearest. Those wonderful days on the Seagull. I should be perfectly happy at Scaurlets if only it would last like this."

"Hm. Do you expect it to?"

Janice shook her head sadly. Then her face crumpled into little humorous dimples. "If I expected it to last I would n't have another miserable moment."

"How many miserable moments have you had?"

Though Janice's mouth laughed, it was her sad eyes that answered Lady Elizabeth. The look she gave her went straight to the cynical old heart.

"Don't think me ungrateful," Janice said quickly; "I never hoped Scaurlets would be so lovely — with the moors and the sea. And then to float away on the Seagull. You are the good fairy to whom I owe it all."

"If you only knew it, I am the old witch who has brewed you a cup of gall and wormwood."

"Ah, never, never!" Janice smiled. "That I would never believe. Don't I know how you loved Daddy? You would n't hurt me, if only for his sake."

"A pack o' mouldy sentiment!" Lady Elizabeth

said testily; "if I know myself I have never loved anyone but myself."

"But then you don't know yourself, dearest! We know you. Knight used to tell us about you on the yacht. I don't think you can guess how he worships you."

The lady cleared her throat. "Worships me, does he, Knight?"

"He says there has never been a mother like you."

"That 's nearer the truth."

The ring of scorn in the words startled the girl. She wondered what made Lady Elizabeth look so shrunken. The green of her gown surely did not account for the sudden pallor round her mouth.

"Dearest, you are ill!" the girl cried, running to her.

Lady Elizabeth leaned heavily on her stick. Janice slipped an arm round her and steadied her. She held her breath, not daring to move while she watched the terror and lividness spread and finally pass from the shrunken face.

"There!" said Lady Elizabeth, giving herself a little shake. "Thank God, that 's over — don't look so frightened, child. A twinge of gout — in the conscience — I 've had it before. It does n't last, you see."

"It must be terrible, dearest; how white you look. Is it really over?"

"Bless me, I should hope so! My conscience is a

maladie imaginaire; it does n't exist. The twinge is pure moral hysteria. But I never thought to set up any womanish weakness at my time of life."

"You must certainly see a doctor," Janice said.

"My good child, I 've just come from doctoring my soul; hence these gauds." She nodded at her gown. "I always wear green when I go to confession. It casts a natural light over my sins. I think I should like to be buried in green. Do you think the plea of nature would move Peter?"

"You are horrid!" Janice made a grimace. "Is Father Donner here?"

"Yes. Do you want to go to confession?"

"I am not a Catholic, you know."

"I remember. You did n't join when your father became one. I did. I was n't going to let religion set up a further barrier between us. Just as well you did n't join, since both my boys are Protestants. I wonder what Logan would have done if you had been a Catholic?"

Janice looked at her quickly. "Would that have prevented his wanting to marry me?" she cried; and her voice was very eager.

"Never, child. He would have wanted to marry you all the same." Lady Elizabeth gave a keen glance at the swiftly clouded face and her mouth twisted into a wry smile.

"I have a mind to play good fairy after all," she said, patting the girl's cheek. "What do you say, Madcap? Shall the old woman mount a white

horse? Shall the fairy wave her hand and chase the cloud from your face?"

"If only you would get well," the girl cried passionately. "I believe you are terribly ill, and hiding it. Oh, dearest, for my sake! Think what it would be for me without you at Scaurlets, with only Logan!"

"Tut, tut! Who says I'm ill? Never in bed in my life, except for the twins. Only Logan? Where's Knight? Where's Heriot?"

"Knight is going away as soon as Logan comes. And Heriot wants to live in the villa with Miss Black. And if you were not here, I could n't stay — alone with Logan!"

She leaned back against a tree; there was a shrill despair in her eyes.

"Hm! I've no intention of leaving you till the Catesbys in the chapel call me. Don't look at me like that, child, else you'll bring on another attack of conscience. Tut, tut! a pretty attitude for a bride towards her bridegroom."

Janice drew herself up, and her face became strong.

"I was weak and foolish. Don't think I am not willing to do as Daddy wished. If Logan wants me still I shall keep my promise; only — only sometimes — But I am sure something will happen to prevent it," she added, a gleam of hope in her voice.

"Tell me exactly what your father said to induce

a girl like you to promise to marry a man she had n't seen."

"I remember his very words," Janice answered, her voice very low. "'It would take the sting from death if I knew I had left my girl to Logan, if your son bore my name, if I felt that the old line would still live.' I did n't know he was going to die when I promised."

"O Sentiment, what lives are ruined in thy name! So your life is to be wrecked too. By all the powers, child, it would have been better if fate had let your father and me marry each other and repent it to the end of time than have left us free to ruin our children's lives. Because we were separated you and Knight must be separated, too, it seems."

"You have had nothing to do with it," Janice smiled sadly.

"More than you think. More than anybody thinks. However, to please you, one of these days I 'll go to Craggan and see a specialist about these twinges of mine."

"Ah yes! I 'm so glad. To whom will you go?"

"His name is MacDermott."

"But that 's not the doctor! MacDermott is the lawyer!"

"There are more MacDermotts than one in Craggan. But this is between you and me. There 's no need to set the others barking round me."

"I won't tell them," Janice promised.

She looked very anxiously at Lady Elizabeth when they sat at breakfast next morning and was relieved to see that she was her brisk, sharp self, her face rosy to match the rosebuds on her gown. So after all it might have been the green silk that had made her look so livid.

Janice sat down to breakfast with less appetite than usual. She had spent a wakeful night. She would row herself out to Chern Island and stay all day among the winds. She longed to feel the rush of the winds against her face. She did not see Knight's eyes watching her empty plate, her untasted coffee.

"Are n't you hungry, Janice?" He pushed away his unfinished porridge.

"I suppose not. I could n't sleep last night. That tiresome man played the bagpipes under my window again."

"What man? What bagpipes?" Knight asked quickly. He looked across at his mother and met her eyes. The old face and the young face wore the same sudden fear. Lady Elizabeth leaned forward, her eyes very keen.

"You were dreaming, Janice. Nobody plays under your window."

"Really, I was n't dreaming. I was wide awake. I got up and looked out and saw him — a man in a grey kilt. He walked up and down, up and down, playing the pipes, such weird, wild music. And he

was there night before last — Why, Heriot! What have I said?"

They all turned to Heriot, who had risen and stood trembling, her head lifted, her eyes fixed, as though she saw some awful thing.

"The grey piper of Scaurlets!" she gasped; "Logan is dead!"

"Don't be a fool!" Lady Elizabeth said, in a voice that did not seem to be hers, it was so still. "It 's all superstition. The piper, if he plays at all, plays for the head of the house. And who says Logan is the head of the house while I 'm alive? Twice you have heard him, Janice? Then we need n't trouble ourselves till he has played three times, and that may never be."

"What is it? Who is it?" Janice asked, looking from one disturbed face to the other.

Knight refused to meet her eyes. His face was white like paper, but cold and expressionless. Lady Elizabeth was drumming on the table, her lips very tight.

Heriot was still on her feet, her hand clutching the back of her chair. "The grey piper of Scaurlets," she said again in a high, thin voice. "I know the legend, I found it in a book in the library. The piper has played for Logan. He is dead."

"What a curious thing that is, now," said Miss Black childishly. "It 's only a day or two since the housekeeper told me the legend — how the grey piper plays all night under the tower rooms before a

death in the family. We congratulated each other on young Sir Logan's safety because no one had heard the piper. But this story of Janice's is very alarming, considering the dangers that beset a soldier's profession."

"There's nothing in it," said Lady Elizabeth. "Logan's wound has never been dangerous. He's on his way home at this moment. There! I thought I would n't tell anybody, but now the news will set you all piping to a different tune." She got up from the table. "Knight, tell Dennis I want him to drive me to Craggan. The dog-cart."

"I will drive you myself," Knight said rather huskily.

"No, I go alone. You can stay and amuse Janice."

Janice shook her head. "I don't want to be amused, I think," she said unsteadily. "I will go out in the boat. I want to be alone too."

CHAPTER XVII

LADY ELIZABETH sat very straight in the dog-cart, a tiny grey old figure beside the tall grey old figure of the coachman.

As they drove along her eyes whisked about, noting the low fields, the moors above them purple with heather.

"The hay is well in the mow, my lady," said Dennis, flicking his whip at a field as they passed. He had been coachman at Catesby before Lady Elizabeth's marriage, and still looked upon her as a young, inexperienced girl.

"I see it," she answered.

"And the harvest is coming to the sickle, my lady."

"I know it."

"Young Sir Logan will be fine and content to win home after his red soldiering. And his bride awaiting him."

Lady Elizabeth was silent. Dennis shook his head and looked aggrieved. It was not like her ladyship to refuse a crack with him.

"Bonnie she is, the Lady Janice, but a wee flighty for Sir Logan. If it had been the other lady, now — Ah, that 's the lady for Scaurlets, the Lady Heriot.

Fine and dignified and sober, as a woman should be."

"That 's what you think, eh?"

"And not alone in thinking it, my lady. There 's others with me in the thought. The Lady Janice would fit Mr. Knight better than she 'll ever fit Sir Logan. It 's the other that 's Sir Logan's own match. It 's bad to spoil two good pairs to make one ill-sorted one. But where our young sir has a will he will have his way. Look at that field now, my lady. He would have it in oats, and what a crop, not worth the reaping! It 's grass land, that 's what it is, and never will bear oats. But Sir Logan was never a farmer; it 's Mr. Knight, now, as knows the land. Every inch of it he knows. Many a time have I said, 'Give Mr. Knight Scaurlets, and in ten years the Catesbys would be lord of Craggan Island.'"

Lady Elizabeth pursed out her lips.

"You can't make a match into a walking-stick, and you can't make a soldier into a farmer," Dennis concluded. He looked reproachfully at his mute mistress, and forced a grudging silence.

Lady Elizabeth's thoughts were busy. Now that she was on her way to see the lawyer she doubted the wisdom of what she intended to do. Her sin had been buried for years; she was going to open the grave and to drag forth the thing that would dishonour her life and ruin the life of the son she had idolised.

The paper in her reticule was a cloud no bigger than a man's hand that would rain storm and ruin on them. And she was calling down the storm for the sake of a girl's pathetic eyes. Janice believed in her truth, and to be true she had to show herself untrue. She was going to blight her whole life because the girl had a trick of loving that made her father live again. "It's all damned sentiment," Lady Elizabeth told herself. "You have lived a sentimentalist and you will die a sentimentalist. Your life has worn pompadour silk for sixty years. Well, well, your days of make-believe come to a finish. They won't cover up your old bones with silk roses, be sure. There will be nothing in your coffin but wicked old bones that they will be glad to put away. Dennis," she said aloud, "see that you chant the lykewake dirge at my coffining."

The old man lifted his hat.

"Please God, I don't live to see your coffining, my lady."

"Tut! you may live to see worse things."

Dennis turned his head sideways, but something in her expression kept him silent.

"What are you muttering to yourself, man?"

"I was thinking of the words that are said over the dead Catesbys, my lady. I said them myself over the earl, your father, when he was coffined. 'We lay thee down in love and great honour.' And for none will they be said more truly than for

you, my lady, when the time comes; which, please God, I never see."

"In love and great honour — hm!" she said. "If we lay us down in peace and sleep, let 's be grateful for so much."

"Ah, my lady, you mind me of some good words the minister wrote for me once out of a book. 'Lay thee down to sleep in peace; cast away all worldly cares. When sickness undresses man for death, then Job's "I know," and St. Paul's "I desire" are the words of sweetest comfort'; — and excuse the liberty, my lady."

"You were always a great reader and a great talker, Dennis. Is that all?"

"All I mind of just now, my lady. Sorely my memory fails."

They drove on without speaking. All at once Dennis held the whip upright, cleared his throat, and spoke in a deep voice.

"'And is this life but the child of death? Then blessed also be the word death, the mother of life. I will no more call thee Marah but Naomi; for thou art not bitter but sweet; more pleasant, though swifter in thy gait than the roe or hind' — asking your ladyship's pardon if I offend."

Lady Elizabeth straightened herself and gave a little chuckle.

"We can all be philosophers when the thing does not touch us."

Her mouth twisted humorously. Dennis, glanc-

ing at her now and again, said to himself that her ladyship had pleasant thoughts to-day. Suddenly she broke out, "Not Marah, but Naomi!

> "Glad did I live and gladly die,
> And I lay me down with a will."

There was a flourish in the way she gave the lines.

"When sickness undresses man for death," she muttered later, and a deep line cut her brow between the eyes — "In love and great honour. Ah well, my dead ears won't miss the words. It was done for love of him, it is undone for love of him; but it is not in the boy's nature to forgive 'because she loved much.' And as for great honour — You are right, Dennis," she nodded cheerfully at the old man. "Cast away all earthly cares. It is certain we can carry nothing out, not even the gauds in which we have made a show before the world. Uprightness, truth, honesty, love, and great honour; not a single one do I carry with me."

"Ah, my lady, only the evil we does sticks to our dead clay."

Dennis chirruped to the horse, shook the reins, and savoured his philosophy with relish.

"And this evil will stick," said the lady grimly; "for Logan will never forgive me." She lifted the bag on her lap. "Wait, Dennis, I doubt if I need go into Craggan this morning."

Dennis pulled up and looked at his mistress for further orders.

"I doubt your ladyship's not feeling just as usual," he said, after he had waited some minutes. "Will I be turning him?"

She roused herself, laid the bag down on her knee. "Drive on. Blessed also be the word death," she said sternly. And she held her head very high. "Drive to MacDermott's," she ordered, when they entered the long street that made the village of Craggan.

The lawyer himself, a dry little old man like a beetle, came to the door bowing and bowing again. Lady Elizabeth was a very great personage at Craggan.

"Get a stool, MacDermott, and help me down. None of us are as young as we were."

Dennis pushed back his hat and pushed out his mouth and stared. What was this? Never in all his experience had his lady needed help in anything. "And her nimble as a flea," he concluded. Her talk of death had not made him anxious, but he shook his head when he saw her grip the lawyer's hand and step with slow care from cart to stool, from stool to pavement.

Inside the office she was her active self.

"No, MacDermott, I've not come to make my will. It's been safe in London these twenty years." She stopped, and a swift thought crossed her face. "But that will do to-morrow, or the next day, or the day after," she said to herself. "Now then, where's your brother? I've a document to sign, and you and Angus must witness it."

"No bad news of Sir Logan, I trust, my lady?" The lawyer opened the door into an inner room, where his brother, also a dry little old man like a beetle, creaked up from his chair at the sight of Lady Elizabeth.

"On his way home, invalided. He was shot in the foot at Spion's Kop. He made light of it, but it can't have been a little thing to keep him in hospital all these months. However, he should be at Southampton in a day or two now. Morning, Angus. Don't waste time talking, either of you. I want to sign while I 'm in the mood. By the way, it 's quite the right thing that my witnesses should be twins. Which of you is the elder, eh?"

"It 's a question we often dispute, my lady."

"Well, if it had been a question of entail you would have known, or perhaps you would n't have known. Dear, dear, what gossips old men are. I told you I wanted no talking. Let 's get to business."

She drew the paper from her old-fashioned reticule. It was folded so that no writing was visible. She took up a pen, and they saw her hesitate half an instant. Then a twinkle came into her eye. "In love and great honour; — I doubt it."

The lawyers, each stroking a stubby chin, looked doubtfully at her and at each other.

"This unknown document —" Angus began blandly.

"I have come to you to witness my signature,"

she interrupted. "In this paper I renounce sentiment and all its wicked works, the pomps and vanities of death. Now then, you witness my hand. Elizabeth Catesby, written in love and great honour. Does it need to be sealed? I want everything done legally. It may not be an important thing to renounce sentiment, but then it may be. And witnessed by twins! O Lord, the humour of it!"

She leaned back in her chair and laughed and laughed again. When the paper was signed, sealed, and delivered, Lady Elizabeth put it in a long envelope, slipped it into her reticule, and remained without speaking or moving. Her eyes became blank, a blue whiteness spread round her mouth.

"Your ladyship is certainly ill!" the brothers exclaimed together.

She roused herself and smiled her crooked smile. "Please God I may never be better than I am at this moment."

She walked steadily to the door and clambered unhelped into the dog-cart.

"Home, Dennis, and drive quickly. I don't want to go at a foot's pace before I 'm obliged. Goodbye, MacDermott; goodbye, Angus. We have this day lighted such a fire in Scaurlets as it will take the sea itself to put out."

CHAPTER XVIII

"A TELEGRAM from Logan," said Lady Elizabeth, looking up from the yellow paper. "Yes, we may expect him to-morrow night — no, scarcely, but certainly the day after."

They were at tea on the lawn. The afternoon was stormy, great banks of cloud covering the sun; but that did not account for the cloud that crossed every face at her words.

Janice sat suddenly still; Heriot paled; Knight's eyes had lighted up, then darkened; Miss Black set down her cup and rose.

"Sir Logan's return brings Janice's marriage happily near, but it brings my own almost equally near. It is a disappointing thing to exchange imagination for reality, the thing hoped for for the thing realised. I will go away and prepare myself to accept the inevitable."

"You can't do better," Lady Elizabeth chirped. She nodded gaily after the retreating figure, then she turned to the others.

"Why, Janice, what has happened? White roses where there were red a minute ago? What! You look as if you heard the grey piper piping for you. Don't tell me you have heard him again."

"Yes, last night; he piped the whole night," Janice said huskily. "But it's not that, I'm not superstitious." She stood up, and a pathetic fear came into her eyes. "I have to keep my promise, but — but — "

Knight rose with a sudden movement that knocked down the chair on which he had been sitting.

"We must make a Highland welcome for Logan, mother; torches and pipers and all. You will be glad to have him back, and when he comes you will be able to spare me. I should like to spend a year or two hunting big game — "

"A year or two!" Janice cried plaintively; "you are going away for a year or two?"

Knight glanced quickly at her and glanced as quickly away again. He went over to his mother, took her withered little hands in both his, and bent over her. "Don't look so white, mother. You know you don't want me if you have Logan."

Her eyes were glassy, her face had grown pinched; but all at once she gave a crisp little laugh and rose to her feet.

"Here's irony to be sure! The return of Logan casts a greater gloom over Scaurlets than his going. Well, well, life abhors a vacuum; our places are soon filled. A Highland welcome for Logan — torches and pipers and all? We must go and set it in hand at once. Here, boy, give me your arm."

In passing Janice she stood on tiptoe to pat her cheek. "Remember this, Madcap. Happiness is

our first task in life — to give and to take. Mind you give where you can take."

"Who will give it to me now?" Janice cried passionately. "Logan is coming, and Knight is going —"

Heriot laid a quiet hand on her arm and stopped the impetuous words.

Nodding cheerfully at them both, Lady Elizabeth passed on. She walked so quickly she almost outdistanced Knight's long strides. His arm was not needed to support her.

The French window of the library stood open. "Come in here," she said. After the daylight on the lawn the room showed dark. As she went in Lady Elizabeth stumbled against the long, narrow table that filled the middle space.

"The Catesbys are always laid out on this table," she said. "I remember seeing my father lying dead here and the servants standing round. Dennis is the only one of them all left. A room full of ghosts. Heriot would not like to be in it so much if she knew its history."

"Oh, I don't know, mother. Heriot is wonderfully free from morbidness."

"A fine creature," Lady Elizabeth nodded. "Why did n't you fall in love with her and prevent all this muddle?" She stood with her back against the table and gave him a long look. He met it frankly.

"It has never been anyone but Janice," he said,

pushing the hair back from his forehead; "and that is why I must go away."

"What! without claiming her? Do you call that love?"

"I can't be disloyal to Logan," he said gravely. "She is his betrothed."

"But the girl loves you! You know she loves you! And you give her up?"

"She was never for me. Would you have me take advantage of Logan's absence to betray him? She does n't guess that I love her. By her father's will she must marry Logan."

"You are a fool! The dead have no right to control the living!"

"Janice will do as she promised if Logan claims her promise — and of course he will."

He walked to the window, to hide his moved face, and stood gazing out. The girls were still under the tree, Janice leaning against the great trunk. Her head was thrown back and her profile was like carved ivory against the wood. He saw the fine curve of her throat, the delicate outline of chin and nose and brow, her dainty shape half hidden, half revealed by the clinging gown.

A lump rose in his throat, a mist over his eyes. He forgot that his mother was watching him, and he leaned his head against the window, sick with hopeless longing.

It had not been so difficult to play the man while Janice's marriage was a remote possibility. Now

that his brother was at the door to claim her, his heart failed him. And he would lose Logan, too, the brother he had worshipped; and his mother, his home, the free life at Scaurlets. Janice's marriage would banish him from them all.

"Well," said Lady Elizabeth, and her voice was thinner and higher than usual. "Well, you are bent on playing faint-heart?"

He swung round to her. "Faint-heart? No, but true heart, I hope."

"We are all sentimentalists, it seems," she said with an odd smile; "and you are the greatest of them all."

She sat down in a big leather-covered chair, leaned her head back, and drummed impatiently on the table. By and by the action changed; her fingers slid slowly up and down and up and down the oak. She closed her eyes and her lips moved. Something in her face frightened him.

"What is it, mother?" he jerked out.

She opened her eyes and showed the grim twinkle alive in them. "I was feeling if the table was hard. Knight," her voice rang strangely, "Janice heard the grey piper last night — the third time. If the piping was for Logan that would solve your problem."

"Hush, mother!" he said sternly. "What happiness would there be for me if Logan died?"

"We can all find consolation in other people's

misfortunes, boy. So your love for Logan is stronger than your love for Janice?"

"It is different. And one can't cut adrift from the thing that has grown with one."

"If you were a woman you could. I, for example, can deal a blow that will stun the life in the son I have worshipped. And yet — no; I did it for love's sake, and now I am undoing it for the sake of his child. So, boy, you will sacrifice Janice to your duty to Logan? Poor little Janice!"

"Mother! mother!" His voice rang with sharp entreaty.

"Well, then, let sentiment have its perfect work."

She made a wry face and drew from her pocket the envelope she had brought from the lawyer's office. "Here, boy, this will untangle the knots for you. Whether Logan, or you either, will ever forgive your old mother —"

"What is it?" he asked, looking curiously at the long, important showing envelope.

"The confession of a sentimentalist, signed, witnessed, red taped round and round so that no court can ever set it aside. It gives you the right to marry Janice. She will keep her promise to her father and yet marry the man she wants to marry."

"But — How? I don't understand —" He had flushed at her words and then turned very white.

"How should you? I don't myself. But the fact is that you are her father's heir. His title and property are yours, not Logan's. No, wait! And

as he wished Janice to marry his heir and keep his estates, the thing is simplicity itself. You being the heir Janice must marry you, not Logan."

"I can't understand! It's impossible! I don't understand. But be very certain I can never oust Logan."

"You don't oust him, it's your right," she rapped out. "You are my eldest son, not Logan. There, you have it in a nutshell."

He steadied himself against the table.

"Tell me how —" he said hoarsely.

"You were born first, and the devil in the shape of the doctor tied a blue ribbon round your arm. Then Logan was born, and they gave him a pink ribbon. Afterwards I thought I saw a likeness to Janice's father in the pink-ribboned baby. At that time I would have sold my soul for him, and the child that was like him was everything to me, you nothing. I could n't bear that the boy who was like him should take the lower place. No one but myself could tell the babies apart. One day I changed the ribbons. There, you have the story."

Knight felt the room swim. He drew a chair forward and sat down. His head dropped on his hands. There was a low mutter of thunder, no other sound, in the room.

The long, long silence was a vampire that sucked the blood from Lady Elizabeth's face. When Knight looked up at last the little old face was like a death mask.

He smiled unsteadily at her, took the heavy envelope, and balanced it on the tips of his fingers.

"This story, mother? You have written it here? How many people know it?"

"You are the first —"

"I am sorry you have troubled to tell me. It can make no difference, you know."

"No difference!" She sat up straight in the chair. "You can forgive the dirty trick I played you?"

He put his hand gently on her head, stooped, and kissed her. "Poor little mother."

Her fingers closed on his; her lips moved, but no sound came from them; her upturned face was like wax.

"Poor little mother! poor little mother!" he said very tenderly, stroking her hand. "Don't worry so. It's all over. We must let the secret remain with us two. And as for this formidable confession, it is so much waste paper; a shocking waste of good red tape." He spoke lightly.

"Wait — boy. Do you know — what you give up?"

His eyes strayed to the window and beyond, where the gleam of a white dress made a splash of light in the twilight of the tree. And beyond her were the woods, and above them the purple moorland, and the hills, and all that made Scaurlets the dearest place on earth to him.

"Oh, my God! Don't I know?" he groaned.

He put up his hand and dashed away the great

drops that sprang out on his forehead. He saw it all. But beyond it he saw Logan's lonely figure leaving home and love and wealth and all he had possessed, at the will of one who had called him brother. A strong light made his eyes steady.

"Yes, mother, I know."

"You don't know!" she cried shrilly. "Owner of Scaurlets, Sir Logan Catesby's heir, Janice's husband. You can't know!"

"You forget that I should rob Logan of all this —"

"Logan is Logan; he will always make a place for himself. He has his soldiering, and the money I have left you I shall will to him."

He shook his head. "We 'll not discuss it any more."

"Tut! I 've made up my mind to save Janice, and I will. I 'll speak to her — I 'll tell Logan —"

"Mother," he said sternly, "I beg you not to speak to them. You owe me something. Well, I claim your silence. It will discharge the debt."

"I owe no man anything," she answered. "And there is Janice. You forget Janice. My silence would force her to marry Logan. What is more to you than the girl's happiness?"

"My mother's honour," he said gently.

She fell back in her chair, then jerked herself up again. "I have done with honour and dishonour. When sickness undresses man for death — Give me that paper —"

"Nay, mother, you are not to be trusted with it." He smiled and tore envelope and paper across and across.

She put out a shaking hand to stop him. She tried to speak, but made only an inarticulate sound in her throat. Her eyes followed him when he walked to the fireplace and made a little heap of paper in the empty grate and lighted it, but her limbs refused to follow him. He stood watching the flames, his face composed and grave. When only a little heap of paper like black butterflies' wings was left, he faced about and went back to his mother.

She had risen and stood propped up against the table, her face the colour of ashes, her lips twisted into her crooked smile.

He put his hand on her shoulder. "Don't be cross, dear. It 's the right thing for us all. There, kiss, and be friends."

He bent his head and looked with boyish coaxing into her face.

"Knight—errant—" she gasped. Then, "Janice — save Janice —" The name ended in a choking noise in her throat. He caught her as she fell. He set her back in her chair, loosened the lace at her neck, sprang to the window, and across the lawn.

"Come," he cried to Janice and Heriot; "my mother has fainted."

The three went running back together. In the dusk of the library Lady Elizabeth's flowered gown

made a fantastic twilight. Her face was set against the dark leather, and the crooked smile on it mocked their anxious eyes.

Janice knelt down and took her hands, but their touch set her shivering. "What is it? What is it?" she cried.

"Hush!" Heriot said softly. "She is dead."

The storm that for days had been gathering over Scaurlets had broken. Inky clouds made night above the darkened towers. Flying fiery banners, the storm marched to the muffled roll of thunder. Among the pines the wind went moaning, and the sea was black dashed with the foam of angry waves.

Through the still house went the hurtle of the thunder, the dirge of the wind; and the shadows gathered thickest in the library, round the table on which a rigid figure, in a green shroud sown with Mayblossoms, smiled a crooked smile at death.

All night and all the day she had been lying there; and now it was night again and only the glimmer of the white upturned face lighted the room and the two women kneeling with bowed heads.

The door opened soundlessly, and a crash of lighted torches startled the dark. Knight came in, his face set to a strained calm; and after him, two by two, carrying flaring torches of pinewood, the servants stepped to the thin shrilling of the bagpipes.

Heriot and Janice rose from their knees and stood, the one on the right hand, the other on the left.

The servants ranged in two files down all the length of the room, and their torches cast a red light on the dead face in their midst. The thin wail of the pipes wandered wistfully about the stillness, then hushed.

The lightning forked across the torchlight, and outside, the thunder tramped in and out of the silence.

Knight took his place beside the dead. Straight and grim and grey, Dennis came out and stood opposite to him. The smoke of the torches swathed the old face and the young face in a grey pall.

One by one the men and women stepped out, gazed on their mistress, and ranged against the wall again, until the dead was once more in the avenue of fire, under the wavering pall of smoke.

Then Knight lifted his hand and spoke in a voice that rang from end to end of the long room: —

"Mother, we lay thee down in love and great honour."

Janice's head fell to her hands and she shook with sudden weeping, that was stayed at the first terrible notes of the dirge.

The rugged voices with their monotonous beat at first seemed part of the distant thunder, then she held her breath to listen to the weird chanting.

"This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and all,
Fire and sleete and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule.

"When from hence away thou 'rt past,
Every night and all,
To Whinny Moor thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy saule.

"If ever thou gavest hosen or shoon,
Every night and all,
Sit thee down and put them on,
And Christ receive thy saule.

"If hosen and shoon thou gavest none,
Every night and all,
The whinnies shall prick thee to the bare bone,
And Christ receive thy saule.

"If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
Every night and all,
The fire shall never make thee shrink,
And Christ receive thy saule.

"If meat and drink thou gavest none,
Every night and all,
The fire shall burn thee to the bare bone,
And Christ receive thy saule."

The hoarse chanting stopped. Every torch was lifted, and the lights flared on the table and on the coffin beside it.

Old Dennis lifted his hand and spoke: —

"Elizabeth Catesby, we lay thee down in love and great honour."

At a sign from Knight the four who were nearest to her lifted the dead and laid her in the coffin. The torches were lowered and the white face gleamed faintly under the wavering pall of smoke.

The rough voices came again muffled.

"This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and all,
Fire and sleete and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule."

The sound at first was like the low moaning of winds in the woods, but the chanting fell and fell until the whole room was still with the breathless presage of storm.

"This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and all,
Fire and sleete and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule."

No one had heard the sound of the opening door. No one saw the man who stood there bare-headed gazing at the ranged faces, the torches fringing the pall of smoke.

He came in slowly, halting, and the grey pall swathed his limbs, leaving uncovered only his frozen face.

Knight, kneeling beside the coffin with bent head, did not look up; but the sigh that shivered round the room like the first gust of the storm breaking made Janice start trembling to her feet.

Her frighted eyes met the stern, terrible eyes of the man passing slowly, haltingly, up the room between the lighted torches.

"It is Logan! Stop him! Will no one stop him?"

She thought her cry must have reached even to the dead ears, but not a sound had passed her lips. As if he had heard he stopped; the smoke swathed his limbs, the crutches on which he walked. He moved forward again, stumbled, and stopped; and Janice saw the shortened limb hanging helpless. In a passion of pity she ran to him, flung her strong young arm round him, and aided his failing strength.

The thin wail of the pipes sounding through the room was drowned by the hoarse, insistent chanting.

"This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and all,
Fire and sleete and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule."

CHAPTER XIX

THE double tragedy had fallen like a bolt upon Scaurlets.

Lady Elizabeth slept with her fathers under the sculptured stones of the chapel, and the son who should have taken her place in pride of race and youth and strength was come crippled to his inheritance.

The desperate plight of Logan, more even than his mother's death, shrivelled the life of the household. It was pitiful to see the ruin of his glory, the helplessness of the strong man. He had barely recovered from the shock of amputation, and the new shock of his tragic home-coming had set him far back on the road to recovery.

All day he lay on the sofa, his face dark with the pain he bore uncomplainingly, worn with the grief he carried in silence. Seeing him, Knight told himself if he had ever, for an instant, been tempted to claim his right, Logan's helplessness would have made it impossible.

Logan bore the loss of his foot with more fortitude than Knight the spectacle of it. Logan could speak cheerfully of the fortunes of war and the excellence of artificial limbs. The subject choked

Knight. He would willingly have given his own foot to see Logan his splendid self again.

It was difficult to recognise in the hollow-eyed, hollow-cheeked invalid the conquering Logan of the past. Would strength ever come back? Would he ever be the man he had been?

If it was torture to Knight to see Logan, it wrung the hearts of the women.

Heriot's love flung its doors wide; she longed to draw him into the shelter of her tenderness. No thought of Janice checked her. She gave love and pity as a right that she claimed.

If Logan had returned to Scaurlets as he had gone away, the wall she had built between herself and love would have resisted any attack. But the crippled Logan had leaped the wall and drawn her love from its fortress. Logan was Janice's betrothed. Did it matter? Nothing mattered but his need and her power to help it.

As for Janice, Logan's weakness was stronger than his strength. Before he came she had had wild thoughts of claiming release from her promise. His helplessness froze the words on her lips. She locked her fetters round her, the willing prisoner of pity.

When his face lighted up at the sight of her, and his thin hand went swiftly to meet her, she could only lay hers in it and strive to keep the light on his face burning. She was so sorry for him, so sorry for him.

In these first days she was always ready to take

Knight's place beside him. Their talk was all of the dead, and it comforted Janice to tell the story of the days she had spent with Lady Elizabeth. Logan told her of her father, of the summer they had passed together, till Janice almost loved him for the gift of the precious months she had lost.

Listening to Logan she did not miss her life on the moors or the sea. She had been stunned by Lady Elizabeth's death, and for the time being the real Janice was in a trance of grief. It seemed to her that she would always be content with these mournful days spent in tender talk of the dead. Logan never reminded her of her promise, but she was ready to redeem it. Her stunned heart could accept the fate from which the merry heart would have turned terrified.

> "And I have asked to be
> Where no storms come,
> Where the great swell is in the haven dumb,
> And out of the swing of the sea."

She said the words to herself as Heriot had said them, and neither her pale lips nor her doomed eyes gave them the lie.

To Logan this tender, still Janice was a revelation not less winning than the radiant witch that had taken his heart. He never asked her to read to him, he never discussed books with her — this was for Heriot; but every day she sang to him sad little songs of love and pity and death that belonged to

their talk of the dead. His mood also was tender and pitiful; it set its notes to hers; and the hours they spent together went hand in hand, with no jarring silence to warn them apart.

In these days Janice scarcely saw Knight, not even at meals; for he took his with Logan, and she kept him resolutely outside the barred door of her thoughts.

Logan was the pivot round which the life of the house revolved, and her life swung with that of everyone else.

A fortnight passed and the household settled down into its new quiet. One became used to missing the tap of quick heels, the sound of a high voice, the sight of a dainty figure about the house. Miss Black knitted in the morning room undisturbed, and when Heriot and Janice were not with Logan they were in the garden, once more together. There was no Lady Elizabeth, no Knight now to carry off Janice. Heriot found her child again; but the pale wistful creature who lived her life apart from her was the ghost of the old Janice. Heriot had no key to the riddle of Janice. What had blighted her face? Surely she was not unwilling to marry Logan because he was a cripple? His helplessness appealed all the more to her, and Janice was as womanly as she.

She studied Logan to find the sternness and tyranny of which Lady Elizabeth had spoken. She found a man bearing his loss with a fortitude that

shamed her own outcry against his fate. No one ever heard an impatient word from him. It was he who smiled when his sufferings made them weep. How could any woman fail to love the brave heart?

Heriot saw that Logan was watching Janice, trying to read the riddle too.

"Janice," he said to her one day, "it is time we had a little talk together."

He winced at the fear that flew to her eyes; her glance fluttered away from his like a startled bird.

"Janice," he smiled, "I believe you are afraid of me."

"N-no," she said uncertainly; "no, I am not afraid." She pulled herself together; she would have to face the moment sooner or later; better to have it over. She folded her hands in her lap, lifted her head, and looked at him, smiling palely.

He noticed how white her face was above the black gown, how the merry little curls had been brushed away from her forehead, leaving her brow grave. Her hair had grown long enough to be fastened in a knot at the nape of her neck. It was partly this, partly her mourning, that made her so much more womanly than he remembered her. He liked her the more for the shadow on her face; they shared the same grief. He was content to see her grave and quiet; she made no glaring contrast to his inaction.

"Come nearer, Janice; I want to see your face."

She turned her chair to the couch and fronted him.

"Ought I to have told you before?" he asked, with a gesture towards the rug whose folds dropped suddenly at the shortened limb.

"I am glad you did n't!" she cried. "I am glad she died without knowing."

"Poor mother! Yes, I am glad she did n't know. It distresses you very much, Janice?"

"It always killed me to see things maimed," she said passionately; "even the broken statues in the galleries. I could never look at them. I was always so sorry for the beautiful things. I know they could n't feel, but I felt —" She was too moved to go on.

He put his hands over his eyes; the expression on her face hurt him like the cut of a whip. When he looked at her again a very bitter smile was on his lips.

"You see me every day — and you can bear it. It does n't kill you to see me?"

"I am so sorry — so sorry," she whispered; "and it is different."

"Yes, it 's different. I can be mended up; they will give me another foot, and I shall be able to get about almost as before. I shan't be anchored to the sofa all my life, you know."

"I know — I am so glad." But the tears that had come to her eyes brimmed over, so that he could see that she was crying.

His face changed; he lifted himself, and his voice rang out with quick triumph.

"Janice, you care for me! You love me — a little!"

She looked at him with a child's piteous face.

"You do care?" he insisted.

"How can one — not care?" she said brokenly. "I am so sorry —"

"Dear little sweetheart!"

He held out his hand to her, and she laid hers in it. Her cold fingers chilled him.

"It 's such a little cold hand," he said, stroking it. "A poor little homeless bird that must find a warm nest soon."

"Soon!" she cried, shrinking away from him.

"You see, Janice, it will be difficult to go on like this — much longer."

"Yes, I know! I know!" She drew her hand away and rose to her feet. "I am going away. It 's all settled. I am going with Blackie and Heriot home again. We only stayed — It seemed so terrible to leave you — like this — in the empty house."

"You must n't go — it would be too lonely. There is another way. You must marry me."

"Ah, no!" she interrupted. "Marry you! No! no!"

The tone in her voice, her terrified eyes, made his face darken.

"Have n't you promised to marry me?" he asked.

"Yes," she gasped, "yes; but — but —"

"You don't wish me to hold you to your promise?"

She covered her face from the inquisition of his eyes. He saw the long shudder quiver through her body and leave it still as marble. His eyes travelled slowly over her beautiful shape and travelled to the rug and the significance of its broken folds. It was this. She had been willing to marry him when he was whole. She had never been able to look on broken or maimed things, and she could not bear the sight of his mutilation. His face hardened till it was iron.

But he must hold her to her promise. Was he to free her for a childish whim? How would he bear the long days in the empty house? Scaurlets without his mother, without Janice, without Heriot; it would be intolerable. Her attitude was childish, and she would get over it. He loved her too dearly to lose her. A mist of tenderness softened his eyes. He saw her standing carved in stone, her face hidden. The droop of her head was despair itself.

Pity for her stirred in his pity for himself. She was so young for despair. If she had been older, a woman like Heriot, she would not have taken his misfortune so tragically. It flashed across him that it might have been better for him if he had loved Heriot. Janice's nature was too irresponsible, too eager, to match the gravity of his. But, unfortunately, it was Janice he loved, and not Heriot.

"Child," he said suddenly, "is it so terrible for you to marry the lame man?"

She shook her head, but did not speak. Logan told himself proudly he was not the man to force a woman to marry him against her will. Lame as he was, he was a man whom any woman, even Janice, might be proud to marry. He tried to say this to the girl and failed. He could not be ungentle with her.

"Poor little thing! Poor little thing!" he said softly.

Her hands dropped from her face, showing its resolute lines.

"Don't," she said. "You mistake. I want to keep my promise."

The light leaped back to his eyes.

"You want to keep your promise, Janice? You want to marry me still? Tell me frankly. You shan't be bound against your will."

He saw her hesitate. He saw the swift flash on her face, the swifter shadow. He saw the resolute pride with which she lifted her head.

"I want to keep my promise." Her voice did not falter.

"Ah! only to keep your promise," he smiled bitterly.

They gazed at each other in a long silence, and each was tortured by the appeal in the other's eyes. Janice's soul cried to him to set her free. His will cried to her to hold herself bound. Something died

in her as she looked. Something was born in him, a love that passed by his own need and saw only the girl's need.

He put out his hand to her and spoke very gently.

"I will not claim your promise, Janice. You are free."

"I am not free, Logan. I promised Daddy."

"That promise should never have been made. It has no power to bind you."

"Logan, I don't want to be free!" There was a ring of entreaty in her voice that made him lift his head with a glad wonder. But he saw her face.

"You are free," he said again, sternly. "If to-morrow — you still wish to keep your promise — you will tell me so."

He turned his face away as if to end the interview. Slowly and lingeringly Janice moved away from him. When she reached the door she stopped and looked back into the room. Logan was lying very still. The folds of the rug were broken violently at the shortened limb.

CHAPTER XX

JANICE went straight from the room, through the garden fragrant with roses, past the chapel glooming among the trees, down the yew-bordered path to the steep cliff road. Her feet did not feel the ruggedness of the way. With a face frozen to the stillness of wax she went on to the harbour.

She took the boat, bent to the oars, and gained the bay without being seen. It was the first time she had been out since Logan's return, and in the fresh breeze her heart lifted. The weight that had crushed her in Logan's presence lightened. The mask she had worn before him fell from her face; she felt the muscles relax, the blood move again. She threw back her head and took in great draughts of the air. Ah! she could breathe again! She could forget the motionless figure on the sofa, the eloquent rug. The waves were spread evenly over the bay; there was no broken fold to make her heart tighten with horror and pity.

There was the Seagull. The sailors were busy on board; they had had her orders to make ready for sea. She heard them singing as they worked, and her heart fluttered up to sing with them.

In a few days she would be sailing towards another summer, back to the south, to the olives and the vines, the blue skies, the sentinel cypresses of her Tuscan home.

She could see herself going up the avenue towards the terrace with its garlands of roses, the Fauns, the Loves, the Daphnes. All the servants would be there, and the peasants; and Beppe and little Giustina would show her the baby that had been born since she left. She would love to have a baby to play with under the olives.

And the people in the other villas would be glad to have her back. They would come to welcome her. The Marchese Malvolino would fill the house with roses.

Her eyes darkened. No, that was all over. She had told her father he need not fear for her, and she would still refuse to receive him. She remembered his words, "Tell the Signorina one day she will receive me;" and she laughed a scornful little laugh. She was not an inexperienced girl now, afraid of the power he had over her.

How good it would be to be in Italy again, where life went singing, undisturbed by the storms that brooded over Scaurlets. She turned her head and looked at the grey windy towers. They cut the line of the sky; but all about them was the shadowy foliage of trees, and beyond them were the moors mantled in purple. After all she would be sorry to go.

She thought of the chapel and its quiet sleepers; one strangely quiet under the silken Mayblossoms. It would be hard to leave her; she had been a link with her father. And Logan, lying still too, who had talked of her father and given back to her those blank months before his death; he would still be on his couch, and there would be only Knight to talk to him. She would leave Knight too; Knight who had allowed Logan to claim her, though she thought he loved her, though he knew she loved him.

Her lips set in a hard line. She would sail away and away from it all. She was free, and Italy called her.

In Italy she would take up her girl's life again as though she had never laid it down. But could she? Would the old unselfconscious life content her?

Since Florence she had felt the stir of great emotions, passion and pain, and love and pity, and hope and despair. They had made in her a new world, a world of mountain and storm and flood, of wide spaces of moor, of wide spaces of sea. They had lighted the stars above her; they had blighted the flowers at her feet. The girl of the Tuscan villa had known nothing of this world within. She had known only the song of the sun, the chant of the wind, the dream of the olives, the silence of the cypresses. Would they content her now, — these things that held secrets the girl had never guessed, but which the woman knew?

She bent to the oars with a will, and the boat rose

on the waves swelling round the rock. She drove it in by the shelving slab, tied it to the staple Knight had had fixed in the rock, and clambered across the seaweed to the level.

The winds were all round her, the rushing winds of the open sea, and she threw her arms wide and cried to them with a cry that rang above their voices.

"I am free! I am free! I am free!"

The gulls swooped round her and answered her shout with mocking screams. She threw her voice higher, but their clamour drowned her cry of freedom.

The white wings beat all round her; the air above her was dark with their shade and their gleam. She watched them with wakened eyes. How easily they sailed down the wind, how hardly against it. How the wind baffled and tossed them, here aiding, there buffeting. What was the good of fighting? Wiser to take the swing onward than to struggle against force and might. She would spread her life to the future and let it sweep her where it would. She had done with fighting the fight in which she struggled to rise, only to fall back baffled. She could not be true to her word and true to herself. She could not keep faith with her heart and faith with her father. And which was right, the thing that was easy or the difficult thing?

The screams of the gulls deafened her. She moved to the edge of the rock and looked down. That was

the shelf where she had seen the wounded gull threatened by the tide. Just so Logan was lying at home waiting for the death that to-morrow's tide would bring him. She thought how she had made Knight risk his life to save the gull while she would not risk a little joy, a little freedom to save Logan.

She sat down on the rock and the noon darkened about her. Every moment of the hours she had spent there with Knight sprang from the past, an armed host fighting against her, fighting for Logan.

Her face grew very wan. Here she had told Knight she loved him, and he had said he had no love to give her. She felt the stab of the words again. She had offered her best, and he had scorned it as a worthless thing.

She smiled very bitterly. She had thought that a man would understand how greatly a woman loved before she would unbare her soul to him; and he had not seen in the act anything more holy and beautiful than the love that offers itself in the market-place. The shame of it scorched her womanhood.

She had thought she would never forgive the shame he had put upon her; and yet she had forgiven him. The days when he had gone near to death had wiped out the wrong. She remembered how she had prayed for his life. She remembered her vow.

She had promised if Knight lived to marry Logan. She had promised her father to marry Logan; she

had promised Logan himself. And to-morrow she would spread her wings to the wind and let it carry her where it would, away from right, and faith, and truth.

"Think nothing for your own interest which makes you break your word. Be not unwilling, selfish, unadvised, or passionate in anything you do. Come to your own aid while yet you may."

It was her father's voice speaking. She remembered the night on the terrace, and she saw herself, not the selfish Janice choosing her own way, but the resolute Janice eyeing the spectre of the future with a heart strong to face it.

"I am not afraid of you," she had said. "I see you have strange looks, and your eyes threaten. There is a scourge in your hand and you offer me sackcloth to wear. I am ready. I can bare my back for the scourge. I can go proudly in sackcloth. Death had no sting for him."

Was that the same Janice who lightly broke her word to God and man, who left a wounded heart to perish rather than risk a little joy, a little freedom?

Ah! no wonder that Knight, brave and true and noble himself, could not love her!

Life was the faun with two faces, and now she was looking on the face of the devil.

To take the sting from death for her father she had been quick to swear away love and life and freedom. To take the sting from life for Logan

she would not yield a hazy dream of freedom. And yet her father had loved him, and he had loved her father and lightened the valley of the shadow of death for him.

That they would always have in common, — love for the two who had loved each other.

Knight did not love her, that was very sure. She had doubted and hoped, and hoped and doubted; but now doubt and hope were ended. He stood by in silence while Logan claimed her. Her heart was dead. She could never again love as she had loved Knight; but she might use her days in taking the sting from life for the man who had fought and lost. She might find peace in helping him to bear his defeat.

"Our first task in life is happiness," Lady Elizabeth had said; "to give and to take." There was none for her to take, but she could give to Logan. She could bare her back for the scourge of love.

And she would have something, — the sea and the moors and the highlands. They would be always with her. And she could escape to this rock and find freedom among the winds.

She lifted her head with the old defiant toss. She would take her life in her hand. She would come to her own aid while yet she might.

And while the thought was in her mind she saw Knight on the rock coming towards her, and the brave mood fell from her, leaving her cold and trembling. She loved him still; in spite of her-

self she loved him. She could not let her life go without one more attempt to save it.

"I saw the boat," he said, and the casual voice beat cruelly on her ears; "I knew you must be here. If you go now you can swing in on the tide."

"Yes," she said, "I shall not stay long."

He looked down at her, and his face matched hers in its restraint and suffering. It was the first time he had been alone with her since Logan's return, and the change in her made him heart-sick. He knew why she had grown wan and thin, and he asked himself if it was right that she should be sacrificed to Logan's need of happiness. Other men had been denied love and had lived to love again.

He would go to Logan and tell him that Janice's heart was breaking because he held her to the promise that ought never to have been made. He would tell Logan that they loved each other. No, that was impossible. He could not take the cup from Logan's lips to put it to his own. He could not tell him he had played traitor and won Janice for himself in his absence; not even to bring the light back to her face, not even to flood his own life with light. He could not do it.

Janice saw his face soften and harden again, and she told herself he was remembering that old scene on the rock. She held herself proudly and looked at him with scornful eyes.

"I am free. Logan has given me my freedom," she said abruptly.

For a moment he did not speak, then his voice came very low.

"You are glad, Janice?"

"How can I be glad? If he gave it a hundred times could I take it now? But I know you think I have no heart."

She turned away and looked out over the sea, her eyes wide with misery.

Knight was silent, curbing his love with an iron will. He would not influence her by sign or look. He knew she was hesitating, and he would not end her hesitation. He would be guiltless of any pain she might give Logan. She must decide, not knowing that he loved her.

"I think you have a heart," he said, forcing a smile. "I remember how you wanted me to save the wounded gull."

She flashed round at him. "I remember, too," she said passionately. "Logan is wounded. *You* could risk your life for a bird —"

"It is a small thing to lay down life," he said. "But, oh my God! to lay down love —" his heart cried in him with a bitter cry. He stooped, picked up a pebble, and sent it skimming across the water, then another and another.

Seeing him, the passion in Janice quieted. Yes, it would be a small thing to lay down her life, the dead bird; all that remained of the white-winged dream that had come from the great deep and gone to the great deep. It would be easy to die once; but

to die every day and every hour for the sake of a pitiful heart —

Knight stopped throwing stones and faced her, master of himself again. She looked at him, and for the last time tried to tear from him the secret he kept behind that barrier of silence. As she gazed the fluttering hope died in her.

He drew out his watch and studied it for moments that seemed to be hours.

"Shall we go, Janice?" he said, looking up at last. "I think it must be almost time for lunch."

"Yes," she said lightly, "by all means let us go. You know my motto? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

"Dear Lady of the Pitiful Heart," he said, with a sharp remembrance of words said long ago; "is it not written, 'Even to-day we die'?"

CHAPTER XXI

"NO man liveth to himself alone, and too many women are permitted to do so," Miss Black sighed. "Ah, Janice, it is a gratifying thing to be present at the death of the ego we have sheltered, to see it under the teeth of the hounds of matrimony."

"Delightful to cut off its brush and show the trophy," Janice laughed. "Charming to be able to convince our friends that we have really run the ego to marriage."

"Charming!" Miss Black agreed gloomily. "Alas, my dear, the dogs of marriage have set their teeth in my future."

"Poor Blackie! No wonder you look solemn."

"Dear child, all the great emotions are solemn. Distrust the love that has a laugh in it. It is a light wanton."

Janice laughed ironically. There was no laugh in her love. She had spent the night at the window of her room, gazing out at the place where the man who loved her had watched with her. It made her tender towards Logan to think of him there sharing her vigil. When morning came it did not seem so

difficult to give her life to the man who loved her. But now she laughed because the love with no laugh in it was the only love before her.

"I like the wanton," she said rebelliously. "I like her lightness. Wanton is the only wear for me."

"My dear, my dear!" exclaimed Miss Black. "You convince me that I dare not leave you. Even if I sacrifice my beloved Peregrine, I must remain to guard you."

Heriot looked up smiling from the desk where she was writing.

"Surely Janice's temperament does not ask such a sacrifice."

Miss Black shook her head.

"I must remain till she is safely married. Her flippancy might startle Sir Logan into breaking off their engagement. I will do my duty and sacrifice my beloved Peregrine. I will terminate my own engagement and find consolation in Janice's domestic felicity. I do not consider the lameness an objection; in fact the artificial limb may possibly be an improvement on nature; in some cases it might easily be."

"Why should you break off your engagement?" Heriot asked.

"Because my beloved Peregrine will wait no longer. He writes that the greatest of misfortunes — a bad cook — has fallen upon him. His life is no longer worth living. If I will not return and

superintend his meals, he must find another to do so."

"Most practical Peregrine!" said Janice. "Well, Blackie, don't you want him to find another?"

"I ask myself," said Miss Black thoughtfully, "whether a woman is happier cooking for a man, or having a man to cook for her. The chef at Scaurlets is irreproachable. That, dear Janice, is likely to be the one permanent element in your married happiness. Contentment with your cook is a great gain, the most abiding in this transitory life. On the other hand, the thought of Peregrine suffering the pangs of indigestion and uprooted affection —"

"Not to be borne for a moment," said Janice vigorously. "You must go marry. The Seagull is ready. We can all start to-morrow."

Miss Black shuddered. "The sea has as many terrors as marriage, and is without its dignity."

Heriot came quickly across the room.

"To start to-morrow, Janice? It's impossible while Logan is so dependent on you."

"He is so independent of me he has given me my freedom, Heriot."

Heriot fell back before her words. Miss Black dropped her knitting and fumbled for her handkerchief.

"My poor child! What a misfortune! To have nothing to dread in the near future. But I forget," her voice brightened, "there is always the Marchese

Malvolino. You will engage yourself to him as soon as we are at the villa."

"Janice," Heriot cried sharply, "you can't go away! You are not a heartless jilt? Without you I think Logan would die. If he has given you your freedom, it is in his great love for you. You would n't be so heartless as to take it?" Her voice shook.

"No," said Janice, smiling. "I am not heartless. I am the Lady of the Pitiful Heart. The worst is, that in being pitiful to others you may be pitiless to yourself."

"Never! never!" Heriot cried. "To show mercy and pity must bring happiness. Can you deny him love and pity? Think what he was! You would have married him in his strength. Will you turn from him in his ruin?"

Miss Black rose sobbing. "I will send my beloved Peregrine a wire to allay his anxieties. One of us must be married, and I had hoped it might be Janice. I will pray for you, Janice, that your heart may be softened to pity and love."

"Pray that it may be hardened from love to pity," said Janice. She waited till the door closed on Miss Black; then she swung round to Heriot.

"It 's so easy to show the path of duty to others. You don't offer to walk in it yourself."

Heriot could not answer her. Under her calm there were hot fires burning. Her heart was aflame to tell Janice that she asked nothing better than to

lay her life at Logan's feet. The words scorched her tongue. But she remembered all that Logan had said to her of his love for Janice, and the flames died down as quickly as they had been kindled.

"Look at me!" said Janice suddenly. "Tell me if I am likely to be happy with Logan?"

The doubt tortured Heriot. She could not advise Janice to do the thing she longed for her to do, not because it would be best for her to do it, but because it would throw open the door of hope to herself. If Logan were free, she knew that he would turn to her.

She set the temptation aside. She knew that Logan could make Janice happy. She would be safer with him than with the Marchese Malvolino, who had gained a strange power over her. If Janice returned to Italy free, she would end by marrying the Marchese, whose gay love had fascinated her.

"Janice," she said tenderly, "if you can't be happy with Logan, you will not be happy with anyone."

"I distrust him," said Janice passionately. "I 'm afraid of him. He will never give up the thing he wants."

Heriot smiled. "Janice, I know a man from whom life had taken everything he valued except the woman he loved. She was bound to him; but he was so noble, so tender, he set her free lest she

should be bound against her will. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life — "

"There is a greater love," said Janice; "that a woman lay down her love. Could you lay down your love, Heriot?"

"Yes," said Heriot. She stood motionless, leaning forward a little, a deep light in her beautiful eyes. There was a new expression about the fine curves of her lips, a patience and silence that softened the lines. Her calm offered a sanctuary to Janice's hunted heart. She laid her head on her shoulder and clung to her.

"Heriot, Heriot, I should always have you. You would never fail me?"

Heriot's hand wandered tenderly over her head.

"Never. I must fail myself first."

"You are so strong, Heriot, so beautiful. Oh, why did n't Logan see it?"

"You are strong, too, sweetest; your heart is strong to do right."

Janice drew herself away and stood alone, her face resolute but pale as Heriot's. Her hands dropped to her sides.

"Strong?" she cried; "no, but weak! I am too tired to beat against the wind. I give myself to the storm; it shall carry me as it will. It would have been finer if I had chosen to marry Logan because I promised Daddy, because I vowed to. But I am going to marry him because I can't resist my pity, his helplessness, your faith in him, my own empty

heart. All these things are against me. I am too tired to fight them. I can't come to my own aid. You remember my flight in the wind that day at the villa? That was splendid; the wonderful rush of it; my strength in the strength of the storm. Perhaps it will be so in life."

"My bird! My bird!" Heriot cried, and held out her hands to her. Janice shook her head.

"No; I want to go to Logan. I must tell him while I may."

She went slowly down the long room, and Heriot gazed after her in an anguish of uncertainty.

Ought she to hold Janice back? Was it right to think only of Logan's happiness? Her mind was tossed on opposing currents. To save Janice? To save Logan? To save herself?

The sound of the door closing roused her. She was alone. Janice had gone.

Her heart shook in her and she ran forward. She checked herself and sank on her knees in the middle of the room.

CHAPTER XXII

ALL night the wind howled round the towers and sobbed among the pines and shrieked across the sea.

The waves thundered at the foot of the rocks; their roar was the deep chord in the chorale of the storm. The thin notes of the rain sang high about the windows and low among the fallen leaves.

Where the trees had flaunted their summer banners there were bare boughs. The storm had ravished the garden before the summer was ended.

The ruin of the storm was on Janice's face as she stood beside Logan in the chapel among the pines. She was in a dream, hearing not the words of the marriage service, but the clamour of the tempest in her heart, the clamour of the storm outside.

The wind caught the rain and hurled its shafts against the windows; it drove it, an army with spears, across the doorway; it dashed it in sheeted folds over the roof. It tore the silence inside and slashed at the voice of the minister till only

a tattered murmur of words sounded about the altar.

The candles were lighted, but they did not break the gloom of the early morning. They showed the faces of the wedding party carved whitely against the dusk. They showed the faces of the servants ranged coldly for this stormy bridal. It was not a month since they had seen the chapel open to receive the dead, and they did not think it seemly that there should be a marriage so soon.

There were no flowers in the chapel but those that Janice had laid on a still unlettered stone in the chancel. Their white glimmer reminded her now of the pale gleam of a face smiling mockingly under the smoke-wreaths. She was in the library at Scaurlets. It was night, and she heard in the roar of the wind the chanting of hoarse voices.

> "This ae night, this ae night,
> Every night and all,
> Fire and sleete and candle-light,
> And Christ receive thy saule.

Again they were coffining the dead. Again Logan was in their midst, halt and helpless. Again the strong impulse of pity was in her. She must go to his help.

"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"

The silence that answered the question shocked her back into the present. She followed the eyes

bent upon Knight and saw that he had stepped forward. His lips moved, but no sound came.

"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"

The minister repeated the question, with a nod to Knight.

"I do," said Janice, in a voice that rang above the roar of the wind; "I give myself to be married to Logan."

She laid her hand on Logan's and turned to him with a wonderful smile, half-love, wholly pitiful. But he shook his head at her with a dismayed, "Hush, Janice! that is all wrong."

She removed her hand and drew apart, the pity in her eyes scornful. There was a little pause, a stir of surprise, a pause again. The minister hesitated, then went on with the office, the wind mocking his drone. The rise and fall of his voice was like the dirge in Janice's ears.

> "If ever thou gavest hosen or shoon,
> Every night and all,
> Sit thee down and put them on,
> And Christ receive thy saule."

The service was over. She was Logan's wife.

"And Christ receive thy soul" drummed in her ears above the words of love and good wishes.

Logan was helped into the house, but she chose to stay in the chapel alone. She was very gentle, hedged about by a silence that stopped their protests.

When they had gone she went into the chancel and stood by the flowers that marked Lady Elizabeth's grave.

"I have done as you did, dearest. I have given my life to one, my love to another. Help me to carry my life bravely as you did. Help me that I may never show my dead heart. I will not see Knight again after to-day, so help me, dearest."

She stooped, gathered a spray of white roses from the grave, and fastened them in her bosom. "I can wear them now; I am dead too," she said.

She went from the chapel, her head lifted to the wind and rain. The garden showed dreary in the sunless morning, but she lingered in it. The buffet of the wind braced her, the rain was a whip that drove her from the past.

"What I have done, I have done," she said to herself, and kept on saying it.

The lamb ran bleating to her, its fleece soiled and dripping. She lifted it and rested her head against it. "After all, I shall have you to love, and the moors and the sea. And if I could save you from death, poor lambie, it should not be so hard to save him."

She went slowly up the steps, carrying the lamb. It was night again, and she bore the marks of a wound. "Only now the teeth of the dog are in my heart," she said. She could even smile at Miss Black's metaphor.

Logan was on the couch in the hall waiting for

her. He held out his hand to her, his face lighting up.

"You absurd Janice! the creature is dripping wet, he will ruin your gown. And he is too heavy for you."

"He is such a dear. And I am used to carrying him."

"Well, put him down, and come to me. What a long time you have been! I want my little wife."

She set the lamb down and went and stood beside him, her face very quiet.

"Well?" he said gaily; "are you glad you married me?"

She waited a moment before she answered him.

"Yes, Logan, I am glad."

He took her hand, fingered the ring, and gave her a pleased look.

"We shall have a terrible crossing," he said, after a time. "What do you say? Shall we put off going for a few days till the weather improves?"

"Oh no! no!" she cried. "I must be on the sea to-day! I must feel the strong wind. I want the rush of the storm. I could not stay at Scaurlets now."

He smiled a little ruefully. "You like the sea better than I do, Janice. Well, it is not a long crossing."

He kissed the hand he held. "How pale you are, child. It is this black dress and the white flowers."

He drew the flowers from her gown and threw them away. "I can't have my bride in mourning. You must put on a white gown and red roses, to match my white-and-red joy. Everything is gay and bright about me to-day; only your eyes are sad."

"They are always like that, you know, Logan." A strange little smile twisted the corners of her mouth. "And I have only worn black a month. It is too soon to forget."

"I don't think we shall forget because the roses are red. Let the dead bury their dead. Life is for us — life and love and all things. You wore black for our sorrow, now you must wear white for our happiness, sweetheart."

"I 'll go and change," she said hurriedly. Her dress, black or white, did not matter to her who could go proudly in sackcloth; but she felt that she must get away from the eyes that claimed her. His love was a tyranny she had not thought to reckon with. "Must I bare my back so soon for the scourge?" she thought piteously.

She ran from the hall, the lamb at her heels. Logan turned his head to look after her, smiling tenderly.

"What a child she is! Even to-day can't sober her; not even her charming blunder. What bride ever gave herself away before?"

He laughed disconcertedly, remembering the clergyman's face, Miss Black's horrified eyes.

He looked very gay and handsome lying there

smiling, a different Logan from the broken invalid of last week. Janice's consent to marry him had acted like magic in bringing back his strength. Knight, coming into the hall, started to see the change in him. He shook the rain off his coat, gulped down something in his throat, told himself he had done well, and went over to Logan.

"There 's a terrible sea running. I doubt if you can cross."

Logan shrugged his shoulders and lifted amused eyes.

"My dear fellow, my wife says we are to cross. I can scarcely thwart her an hour after marriage, but I see I shall have to tame my dainty shrew."

"Tame her! Tame Janice? You can't! She is of the wind and the wave; you will never tame her. She is a bird; don't cut her wings. Don't try to turn her into an ordinary woman."

"What an irresponsible creature you make her!" Logan laughed. "Well, we shall see. But if you were in my place, my boy, you would n't want a wife without dignity. Imagine it! a tempest at breakfast, a wave in the drawing-room, a bird to pour our tea! No, no, Janice will have to take her place as Lady Catesby, if I have to teach her myself."

"You yourself called her a lyric, a song."

"Ah! that 's different. A woman can be a song. Songs are not free; in fact they are generally bound."

He chuckled over the poor joke, but Knight did not smile. He turned away and examined the crutches lying beside the couch.

"You will soon throw away these?" he said, in a dry voice.

"Thank goodness, yes! I 'll see to it the minute we are in Edinburgh. I am afraid Janice will be bored for the first day or so."

Knight swung round and walked out of the hall. The door of the morning-room stood ajar. He had not been in it since his mother died. He would go in now. The memory of her would quiet the raging in him, the bitter revolt, the sudden fear for Janice.

He was in the room before he saw that Janice was behind the screen bending over the miniatures. She turned, saw him, and ran to him, holding out her hand.

"Oh, Knight! help me! help me!"

She was not crying. He felt that tears would have been less moving than the look on her face. Had she too had a glimpse into that threatening future? He sheltered her hand in his, and it was as if he had opened a strong tower to her.

"I am glad to find you, Janice," he said gently. "I wanted to thank you — to thank you for your truth and loyalty. You have given Logan life."

"Logan! Logan!" she said sharply. "Is he a god that he should not suffer? Why do you all unite to shield him?"

"I suppose — We have always felt that he was

king at Scaurlets. We have always thought of him as a king among men."

"I know. But I— No one thinks—" Her voice broke.

"Janice, I think—" He stopped and looked full at her. The words that came after were not those he had meant to say.

"I think God made you very noble," he finished.

She snatched her hand from his with a sudden violence.

"Or the devil!" she said passionately. "Is it God who ruins our lives? Does God cut off our years before they are perfect? Does He smite us to the ground when life springs strong in us?"

"Perhaps," he said quietly. "Listen, Janice. One day, out on the Black Tor, I saw a clump of reeds, green and straight and strong. There came a great wind, and when I passed again the reeds were shaken and bent; one was even snapped at the root. Days after there was a strange fairy music on the moors; you heard it yourself, the shepherd piping on the reed. It was the one the storm had broken. I think, Janice, life is God's shepherd that takes our broken years and draws fine music from them."

"Life is the shepherd that leaves the lambs to be killed by the dogs," she said fiercely.

"No, to be saved by the Lady of the Pitiful Heart."

He walked to the screen and studied the portraits

of himself and his brother. There was a force in Logan's face that he had never read aright before. After a while he came back to her and his face was strange to her, but his voice was strong.

"You remember you told me once what your thoughts were like? I have often remembered it. I wonder if you know how you looked that day — a mountain woman, with the strength of the hills, the mystery of the clouds in your face? You seemed capable of all high things; wild, but free and strong, with the flight of an eagle and the softness of the dove in your heart. That is how I shall like to think of you, 'half angel and half bird.' I shall want to think of you among those thoughts, 'like the wind harping in the high boughs of the pines.' That is the Janice I shall always remember; the Lady of the High Thoughts, the Winged Dreams, and the Pitiful Heart."

"My thoughts are like the wind," she said huskily; "moaning with the pain of the souls that perish. Listen outside; my thoughts are like that, storms that ruin the roses, tempests that kill the summer."

"Be patient," he said. "It is not always storm with us. The roar will cease, and then you will hear the harping in the pines; the winds will sleep, then listen for their winged dreams in the reed."

He held out his hand again with his grave smile.

"It is goodbye, Janice; you are Lady Catesby now."

She laid hers in it and gazed up at him, her heart and soul and the strength of her passion swooning in her eyes.

"No, no," she sobbed, "Janice, always Janice; Janice of the laugh and the sad eyes."

CHAPTER XXIII

THEY were to be gone ten days, just long enough for Logan's business with the surgeons, then they must return that Miss Black might go to her impatient Peregrine. She and Heriot would only wait to welcome them home, and then Janice and Logan would be alone at Scaurlets.

On her wedding morning Janice had thought that life was over. But she had not reckoned with her youth and her superb physical strength.

The stormy crossing set the blood swinging again in her veins. She had said goodbye to Knight for ever. Scaurlets was behind her. There was no Logan on deck to remind her that she was in chains.

She lifted her head and faced the winds with her old triumph. She found that she could laugh when they swooped down upon her and tussled her and tried to swing her off her feet.

"Take me! take me!" she cried, holding out her arms to them. "I am not afraid of you. I am a bird in the wind. I belong to the storm and the tempest."

In the midst of his misery below Logan sent her maid to her entreating her to take shelter. She

lifted her face to the stinging rain and laughed. Take shelter from her loosed bonds, her freed wings, from the life springing after death? She shook the drenched curls from her forehead and paced the deck with feet that trod on air.

Ah, life was good! life was good, even though she had said goodbye for ever to love, even though she was Logan's wife.

She was glad the Seagull belonged to her. It would be a way of escape if life were ever too difficult. All the better that Logan was a bad sailor and hated the sea. On the Seagull she could escape from the love that already frightened her. If this was love, then indeed Knight had never loved her. She had never seen in his eyes the look that claimed her, body and soul.

They left the storm when they left the yacht. The land was shining after rain. They travelled through fields yellow with harvest, through reddening woods, across moors deeply purpled, through meadows smiling in sun.

Janice spread her soul to the day. How could anyone be sad in such a gay world?

Logan was very good to her, laughing at her eager delight in the beautiful country. If he had been able to walk he could have taken her to Paradise for their honeymoon, he told her.

The thought that he could not walk, that he could not even go from window to window of the railway carriage as she did, smote her with pity. She would

be very good to him, she would atone to him for this cruel denial.

He was so happy to-day, it would be worth while to spend her life to make him happy always, like this. How strong and splendid he looked, a man who could come to blows with the enemy, Pain, and vanquish it. She could always be proud of him, at least.

And he was tender, too, and unselfish. It touched her to see his thought for her. His man must leave him to attend first to Lady Catesby's comfort.

Janice protested; he insisted. They struggled, and Janice found herself worsted and liked Logan the better for it.

In his care for her he reminded her of Knight. He was like Knight in so many ways; it was only his reserve that made him seem masterful, only his dark complexion that made him seem stern. He was like her father too, curiously alike in features and expression. If only she had seen him first she might have loved him.

Janice looked at herself, startled. Was this the same Janice who, eight hours ago, had buried life and love in the chapel at Scaurlets? Could a woman so soon forget the passion that had rent her very soul?

"If Knight had loved me — if he had loved me — I could have lived my whole life alone and been happy," she told herself.

And then Logan called her for the first glimpse

of Edinburgh, and it was all excitement and wonder again.

During the next days she had time and to spare for thought, while the surgeons were busy with Logan or he lay resting in his room, too tired even to see her.

She resented her imprisonment. It was terrible to be shut up all day in the hotel, and an enchanted city outside. Her pale and passionate face was the sign of the storm gathering in her, but Logan would not see it. He would not listen to her.

"No, no, little wife; you are too beautiful to be trusted out alone. Some one might run away with you, and then I could not run after you to rescue you."

"We are not in Sicily," she frowned. "And I have Saunders. A lady and her maid can go anywhere."

"Not when the lady is my wife. I should not have a quiet minute while you were away. You must consider me a little. We shall often be in Edinburgh, and when I can get out I will show you everything."

CHAPTER XXIV

IT was the night of their return from Edinburgh. The bustle of their arrival, the excitement of seeing Logan walking again, apparently sound, had given place to the bustle of preparation for Miss Black's departure. The bells were continually ringing. In the servants' hall there were scornful criticisms of Miss Black's need of brown paper and twine. An ever-increasing number of bandboxes promised to give excitement to the journey between Scaurlets and Florence.

Heriot's leather trunks were already strapped. She stood in her room looking at them with a grave face. They held the love that Scaurlets had given her, that Scaurlets had taken away. She was going back to her old life again at the villa; but now there would be no Janice, no dreams, no future. She had dreamed her dream and had wakened. The years stretched on untouched by any glamour; there was no rosy light of hope on the steep way before her. She would pass down the circles of life with no escort, lonelier for the want of Janice.

"Heriot I baptise with purple passion."

She had had her baptism of passion, and it had faded as soon as the anemone petals Janice had scattered over her.

She was restless to leave Scaurlets. Away from Logan peace would come to her. She would find strength to crush the heart that still sang at the sound of his voice, that still welcomed the sound of his steps.

The villa would be her haven, where the great swell of life would be still, where she would be out of the swing of the sea. There she would go softly all her days.

Her longing to go stunned the pain of leaving Janice; it urged her away from the love that had once contented her. She could not remain with Janice and forget Logan. She longed to go away from Janice.

> **"I warmed both hands before the fire of life,"**
> **It sinks, and I am ready to depart."**

She said the words aloud and lifted her head and saw that Janice was beside her. She put her arm round the girl.

"My sweet, I knew that you would come to say good-night. You are very tired?" She gazed anxiously at Janice's white face.

"Yes, my heart is tired. Oh, Heriot, 'we are so tired, my heart and I.'"

"What is it?" Heriot cried. "Janice, what has happened?"

"Nothing has happened. Nothing will ever happen any more. My life is dead."

"Dead, Janice, with Logan to love you?"

"Yes, he loves me with flames cast in iron. His love is a fire moulded in metal to make my prison. I am behind the locked gate of the flames and the torches. You remember the gate at the villa? I know what it means now. And outside are freedom, and life in blossom, and a city of singing bells, — all these, and none for me."

She drew away from Heriot and stared before her with hopeless eyes.

"My sweet," Heriot said, "you forget. Inside the gate there were flowers too, and trees and the song of lovers."

"An avenue of cypresses," said Janice; "and priests chanting over the dead."

"But beyond, the roses," Heriot cried eagerly; "and the high terrace and statues crowned with garlands."

"A faun with two faces, Heriot. And I look on the face of the devil." She turned away and walked restlessly about the room. She stopped by Heriot's trunks and, half unconsciously, began loosing the straps.

Heriot watched her with a sick pain at the heart. Was it for this that she herself had turned away from the way of love? Had Janice found safety at the price of the joy of life?

"Logan is so true, so just," she faltered at last.

"That is it," said Janice, "he is perfection, cold and flawless as marble. He is too wise to be mistaken; his love sees so clearly. If only he had some human weakness. I could take an axe and hack down his laurelled virtues. That would be a way of escape from his perfections."

"You promised to love and honour him, Janice."

"As I promised to marry him, ignorant fool that I was. Did I know what it meant? Oh, the bitterness of it."

Her hands worked feverishly, unbuckling the straps on all the trunks. When she had done she came over and laid a heavy hand on Heriot's arm.

"Heriot, I can't let you go. You must stop with me. If I am left here, alone with Logan, I shall do something terrible. When a woman is so weak she lets herself be carried to good against her will, be sure she will let herself be carried to evil as weakly. If you stayed you could save me."

"Let me think! Let me think!" Heriot cried.

She walked to the fireplace and leaned her head against the high mantel, and the memory of the night when she had renounced love returned to her.

Was it right that she should be asked now to renounce her only hope of peace?

What peace could there be for her, always with Logan? She loved him more now because Janice had no love for him.

Pictures painted themselves on her imagination; she saw herself in the haven of the villa, at peace, yet knowing no peace because Janice and her husband were out on stormy seas. She saw herself at Scaurlets, dying daily, yet hiding her struggle and suffering that she might give strength to Janice.

She saw herself at Florence, in the sunny garden where the roses rioted and the silver olives were the symbols of peace. She saw Janice in the garden at Scaurlets, and it was winter.

She saw the bare boughs, the sodden leaves, the alleys out of which the flowers had trooped, the deserted beds.

The garden in winter was the woman waiting for love; but who could tell if any love would blossom for Janice now?

Heriot saw herself leaving her sunny garden and sharing a winter desolation with Janice; she saw herself leaving the peaceful haven and putting forth into the storm.

"O God, give me strength not to fight against Thy strong wind!" she cried. "O God, give me strength not to fight against Thy strong wind!"

She put her hand to her head, and it touched the carved motto of the mantelpiece, — "Who trusts loves."

She trusted Logan still. Janice's revolt against him was the revolt of a child thwarted for the first time and not understanding. She might be taught

to understand. Heriot could teach her. Whatever it cost her, whatever denial, she must stay to save Janice from ruining her own life and Logan's. Janice had closed the gate in his face. Heriot had the key that would open it again to him.

CHAPTER XXV

JANICE had come back from Edinburgh, having clashed wills with Logan and been worsted. She bore it patiently at first. His helplessness was so pitiful, and she really wished to atone to him for the blow that fate had dealt him.

But when he could get about again, and she saw him strong and masterful, forcing from life all that he wanted for his own happiness, her pity died, and with it the love that pity might have awakened. Logan was king at Scaurlets, practically king of Craggan, and he bore himself like one. In Lady Elizabeth's time it was "the family" that claimed the faith of the islanders and the clannish loyalty of the tenants. Now it was "Sir Logan." She resented his dominance; she resented the tyranny of his personality. More than all she resented his control of her liberty.

But the months brought her a new hope. Something was before her that would fill her empty heart. It would have softened her to Logan if he had not taken the occasion to rivet her fetters. He cut her off from everything that made her life. Her one wish that he had not opposed was to keep Heriot with her. His consent had been given, even enthu-

siastically, and he had hinted his suspicions that Knight admired Heriot. He had no suspicion that it was Heriot's influence that kept the smouldering fury in Janice from bursting into flame. She was a prisoner in her husband's house. She had always thought of the Seagull as a way of escape from Logan. He refused to let her go on board the yacht. One morning she looked out to find no Seagull in the harbour. Logan explained that it was ruin to keep the yacht undocked through the winter and he had sent her to Greenock. She took the boat and spent the day alone on Chern Island. Logan gave orders that she was not to take the boat without a man to row her.

It was the same as to walking — no more lonely days on the moors for her, no more solitary hours on the high lands. He could not walk with her, and he needed Heriot to read to him. If Janice must go on the moors, she must take Dennis with her. Janice smiled scornfully; Dennis who could n't walk a mile!

There was the little Arab that Knight had broken in for her. She mounted him and came home with the wind in her eyes and hair and the light on her face. Logan doubted the wisdom of horse exercise just now; and in any case she must never go out without a groom.

And she needed to be alone! She needed to be alone with her hope, among the winds and the moors and the high hills. She needed to be alone to hear

the thoughts harping in the high boughs of the pines. She had secrets to tell the morning, dainty imaginings to unfold to the noonday, mysteries to reveal to the night and the stars. There was a new little soul to be led into the high places of nature. She wanted her baby to be born with the dream in his heart.

And instead of all this Logan condemned her to sit with him in the gloomy library where she could never forget that she had watched by the dead, now, when she had a watch to keep with the living. He condemned her to walk with him in the sunless garden, to monotonous drives with him behind Dennis and horses slowed down to a discreet pace. He was obdurate in his wisdom. "If you will not think of the child, Janice, I must. It is fortunate he has a man with some common-sense for his father."

"*You* his father, Logan? Little you know!" Janice cried bitterly one day after a tussle of wills; and she turned from him with angry eyes.

His egoism maddened her. Their life together was set to the key of Logan's reason, and the pitch was too low for her.

No, no. The father of her child was the great Spirit who had breathed His breath into her life to keep her from breaking away from good, to keep her from looking on the face of evil.

Her face was towards the little angel face of her child. She hoped she would see nothing in him to

remind her of his earthly father. In these moods she would slip away by herself and take the miniature that Lady Elizabeth had given her, and looking on the sunny-eyed baby Knight, she would pray that her child might be like Knight rather than like his father.

Heriot watched the two with a heart that would have despaired if the future had not held out hope. She saw that Logan was overcareful, Janice restless; but she had faith in Logan's love to conquer the rebellious heart.

"I am anxious about Janice," Heriot said to Logan one day.

He let his book clatter to the ground and sat up sharply.

"Anxious about Janice? What? why? Nothing going wrong?"

"Nothing definite. Only she is so unlike herself."

A swift relief showed on his face.

"Oh, only that. Yes, I 've noticed it. Poor little thing, she is depressed; but that is natural. All women are like that, are n't they?"

"Not Janice. She is splendidly strong. She had such magnificent spirits, and they are gone. She has no physical suffering, yet she suffers."

His brows drew together. "My poor little girl. And she has never complained, brave soul. But what is this legend of wonderful animal spirits? I have never seen them. In fact I should describe Janice as a wilful person with an obstinate

depression and an uncontrolled restlessness. She must learn to control her restlessness."

"Janice has never been like other girls. She must be in the air all day if she is to live. She is more bird than woman, and she can't be caged. Perhaps if you understood that —" She broke off wistfully.

Logan smiled. "A bird, is she? I remember Knight saying something of the sort. Well, she is flighty enough for it. She ought to go out more, you think? I must see how it can be managed. Of course there are the gillies, but she won't go with them. I can't ask Miss Black to come back from Florence."

He knit his brows and thought. "She can't go alone, that I will never allow. Pity Knight is not here, that would have solved the difficulty. Confound the fellow! he has not been near the place since we married. I will think about it and see what can be done. It will never do for my little bird-wife to fret or be unhappy. Meanwhile, she is very fortunate in her friend."

He held out his hand to Heriot with his pleasant smile, and she went away wondering that Janice was not touched by his love.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE result of Logan's thinking was a summons to Knight to come at once to Scaurlets. The letter was urgent, the reason for the summons vague; and fearing serious trouble, Knight set aside his determination not to see Janice again, and was at Scaurlets before she knew he was coming.

The change in her made him pardon Logan for his recall. The spirited beautiful girl he had left was a lifeless and weary woman. Only despair and a broken heart could have worked such cruel havoc with her. Even his coming did not rouse her from her apathy. She had no desire to go out now, and it was Logan's wish rather than Knight's invitation that at last drew her from the house.

At first she only wanted to be on the sea. They spent whole days in the boat, Janice leaning back on the cushions, Knight watching her without speaking. They had little to say to each other, but gradually Janice became more like herself. The strain of Logan's will was lifted; she was free again; she could brood over the future undisturbed. Knight did not interfere with her thoughts as Logan did. If he spoke at all his mood chimed in with hers.

If he was silent she knew he shared her delight in the tossing of the sea, in the bite of the wind, in the sting of the spray.

She could smile again, and the trouble cleared from Knight's eyes. It was not her heart that was broken, but the spring in her, and that could be mended.

Soon she was eager for the moors — "To wander away and away with Nature, the dear old nurse." Knight could barely keep pace with her energy. She was never tired; the red flamed in her cheeks again. To swing away over the moors, that was what she needed; to lie couched on the heather where the spring sun could seek her and shine in on her thoughts! Ah, how good the days were! And there were better days coming, every hour brimming over with wonder and delight.

Logan was startled to see how well his plan worked. This was a new Janice that he saw. He began to believe the legend of her magnificent spirits. She sang about the house now; he heard a laugh in the garden, and knew exactly where Janice was. She was ready to walk with him his dull round. She had ceased to go away whenever he came near her. He was quite contented with his plan. He looked at Janice only, and never saw the strain on Knight's face.

When Knight spoke of leaving he silenced him curtly. It was impossible while Janice needed him.

Knight knew it was impossible. He could n't

leave her to sink back into the dreary monotony of the life Logan lived.

It was not so hard for him to remain with her. Her feeling for him had given place to new and stronger emotions. He could see that he had no place in her thoughts.

One day they were out on the Black Tor together. Knight found a sheltered bank for Janice and left her to rest. He had his gun with him and might make a bag.

Janice leaned back and watched his long strides over the heather. His strength was so easy she thought with a pang of Logan's halting walk. He would never stride over the heather like that. Knight seemed to have grown straighter and taller in his absence. He was changed in other ways. His sunny smile came seldom; his face had lost its boyishness. It was as strong as Logan's now.

She had schooled herself to forget him, and it had not been so difficult. The new hope had killed the old hopelessness. She watched him till his grey figure was blurred in the grey distance. Then she drew out the miniature of the baby Knight, and studied it. She smiled to herself with a little amused cynicism as she reflected that, after all, the baby in the miniature was more to her now than the grown man.

"Lady Elizabeth was right," she said to herself. "Wifehood is less to a woman than motherhood."

A soft brooding look was in her eyes; the same

soft brooding was on the moors and the hills, the tender dream of spring awaiting birth.

"He will come with the birds and the lambs and the flowers, my April boy," she sang. "He will belong to the sun and the rain, the laugh and the sad eyes."

It was already March. She would not have long to wait.

Knight seemed to have been gone a very short time; there he was coming back already. She lifted herself from the bank and hid away the miniature. From that distance he could n't have seen what she was holding.

Suddenly his gun flashed and a sharp report rang out. She heard his cry and saw him fall forward. The heather covered him.

Her scream went across the moor. She sprang up, but her limbs failed. She fell heavily and struck her temple against a point of rock.

Darkness came on her and a horror of death. To die there, away from Knight who was wounded — who might be dying — might be dead! Ah, then, let death come to her — death who had been kinder than life and given them to each other.

Yes, death had been kind; they had found each other here, where it was dark and cold and clammy. She could feel his arms round her, she could hear his voice, "My own love, my own love! God! I have killed her!"

She fought to tear away the darkness between

them, to rend the veil that hid his face from her, but she could do nothing. She could only feel the love that crushed her to his heart. She could only hear the breaking voice, "I 've killed her, my little Janice, my little love!"

She struggled to speak, to answer love with love; but there was no sound in her voice. She could not tell him that she knew he loved her; that death had given them to each other.

At last the cloud lifted; she could see his face, the love and anguish in his eyes.

"Love," she said brokenly. "Your — little — love."

He laid her back gently on the grass.

"Thank God! Thank God! Oh, my little child! I thought —"

He checked the words. The relief on his face was clouded by a livid shadow.

"Did you faint, Janice? You have cut your head. What was it?"

His voice was hard and dry now.

She passed her hands over her eyes, wondering why her head was bound, and sighed deeply.

"Not dead? I thought — we were dead."

"Not dead! Not hurt even, thank God. I caught my foot in a root; the gun went off as I fell. I heard you scream. When I saw you bleeding — I thought — my God! I thought I had killed you!"

A smile crossed the deadly whiteness of her lips.

"It would be nice to die now — you love me."

"You must forget it!" he said sternly. "We must both forget — "

Her eyes closed again, and she began to shiver.

He knelt beside her and rubbed her hands. He found water and dashed it in her face, and by and by she revived and took some brandy from the flask he carried.

"What is to be done, Janice? I can't leave you to get help — and you can't walk home."

"You will see," she said. "Let me rest a little. Give me time."

He went away a little distance and waited within call. What was to be done? What was to be done?

He covered his eyes and tried to think, and tried to get away from the horror of his self-betrayal. She knew now that he loved her. How could they live as if they did n't know? It would have been better if he had died before he betrayed his secret.

When he looked up Janice was coming to him, stepping slowly over the ground, her face blanched but her eyes soft and shining. He moved to meet her. She stopped him.

"Knight," she said quietly, "you should have told me before. I could have lived alone, and died alone, happy because you loved me. You wronged me when you let me marry Logan. But now I am his wife, and my little child must never know dishonour."

She lifted her head with a fine emotion. "I

should like him at last to lay me down in love and great honour." Then the pride fell from her, and she put out her hands with a little piteous cry. "I am very weak, and I love you so. You will help me to be true — to Logan — "

He took her hands and held them strongly in his. "You may trust me, Janice."

She walked home, and he never knew what supreme will forced her along the road. But that night life and death struggled over two lives at Scaurlets.

CHAPTER XXVII

KNIGHT did not see Janice again. He only waited to know that she was out of danger, and the boy likely to live, before he spoke of leaving Scaurlets.

No one opposed his going. Logan and Heriot could think only of Janice and the child. Logan showed him proudly to Knight; he was a beautiful boy, though his coming had been hurried; and Knight saw that even so early he resembled the baby in the miniature. He had found the portrait on the moor the day of Janice's adventure and had put it among the others in the morning-room.

He was glad to go away. He would disappear so that Janice might forget that he loved her, and turn to Logan. She could not fail to love the father of her child.

Fortunately he was not dependent on Logan. The fortune his mother had left him was ample. He could choose his own life. He meant to work. It was work that would help him most. He felt somewhat forlorn as he stood in the station at Glasgow waiting for the night express to London.

He and Logan had been more than brothers; yet he was not necessary to Logan. The world seemed suddenly empty. A man passing touched his hat to him. "For London, Mr. Catesby?" It was Angus MacDermott the lawyer.

Knight turned eagerly, and they walked up and down the platform together. It was a relief to talk to MacDermott of events at Scaurlets; the birth of Janice's boy interested everyone at Craggan.

MacDermott spoke of Lady Elizabeth's visit to him and the signing of the mysterious document. Knight told him again that no such document had been found in the house.

Then the train came up.

"Ah, you go in the sleeper," said MacDermott. "For my part I prefer the seat of the ordinary carriage and a few bawbies more in my pocket in the morning."

"You 'll have to sit up all night," Knight laughed; "the train is very full; I am lucky to be alone." But before the train started the guard came to say he could not give Knight a whole compartment in the sleeping-car. There would be another passenger in the other berth.

Knight shrugged his shoulders and gave a glance at the other passenger, a man about his own age. They talked, and he told Knight he had been in the Bush ten years. He had come home to settle and to hunt up his old friends. They were all

dead and scattered, and he found England lonelier than the Bush. It was hard on a man to find himself alone in the world. He might go back. He had friends out there. They talked of Bush life, and Knight became interested in the vivid pictures his companion painted. It might be the very thing to suit him. It would cut him off from Janice.

He lay awake, long after the other man was asleep, thinking of the life that he might lead. It offered all that he wanted.

The idea took hold of him. He could not sleep. The compartment was stuffy, the jolting of the train became intolerable. He would go into the corridor and watch the stars flying past. He was in his sleeping suit, but he could find his coat without uncovering the lamp. The other man was sleeping soundly, it would be a pity to wake him.

Surely he had hung the coat here at the head of his bed, but the peg was empty. It must be on the other peg. Ah, here!

The train jerked. He grazed his shoulder in the violence with which he was thrown against the window. He drew himself in, smiling ruefully. He would never travel by this line again; the jolting of the carriage was intolerable, though it was a sleeper. MacDermott would not fare worse in his ordinary carriage. Then he laughed at himself for grumbling. A fine preparation for roughing

it in the Bush! In ten years he would be like that fellow inside and sleep through even a railway accident. Ah! what was that? His heart stood still, then pounded violently. A horrible grinding, splintering sound was all about him. The floor of the carriage seemed to be rising towards the roof. Knight gave a great shout and sprang to open the door. He felt the handle cold against his hand — and then — nothing!

Logan and Heriot were at breakfast when MacDermott's telegram arrived. Logan handed it to Heriot without a word. His manner told her that some terrible thing had happened, and her thoughts flew to Knight. She knew the worst before she read the telegram.

"STATION HOTEL, CREWE, 7 A.M.

"Deeply regret to inform you accident to Scotch express. Six dead, among them your brother. Have identified the body, and will await instructions. My respectful sympathy.

"MacDermott W. S. Craggan."

She laid down the paper and looked at Logan.

"Janice must not know," he said hoarsely.

Heriot could not speak. Logan took the telegram, folded it, and put it in his pocket.

"No one must know at present."

"When can you start?" Heriot asked.

"I can't leave her — she would suspect. Mac-

Dermott will see to everything — bring him home — "

He began to walk up and down the room; the look on his face kept Heriot from speaking.

"We were born together," he muttered. "And now — I can't believe it! Knight! Knight!" Heriot rose softly and left him.

Later in the day came another telegram from MacDermott.

"Respectfully suggest that the interment take place here to-morrow. Inquest over. Will act for you as directed. Have written. Will come to Scaurlets immediately after funeral."

"It is so sad that he should be buried like a stranger, without a friend," Heriot said pitifully.

"There must be reasons," Logan answered. "MacDermott had orders to bring him home. Afterwards, when Janice knows, I will go to Crewe."

He had seen Janice, and nothing in his manner had warned her of the blow that had fallen on him. He had taken the child in his arms and looked long on the little face. "I should like him to be called Knight, Janice."

"But is n't it settled 'Logan,' after Daddy?"

"I have changed my mind. I prefer that he should be called Knight."

MacDermott's letter came next day. Before reading it Logan told Janice he was going to Craggan

and would be away some hours. He himself drove, though now the servants knew what had happened. It had been necessary to tell them before the morning papers came.

The horror in the house did not reach to the tower room, where Janice lay laughing softly at her baby. Heriot, smiling at Janice's happiness, gave no hint of the tragedy, though she had come from reading MacDermott's letter.

He had seen Mr. Catesby enter the sleeping-car at Glasgow; he was alone in the end compartment. All went well until they neared Crewe, when the train began to jolt. Suddenly there was a frightful jar and the carriages crashed together. MacDermott was one of the last to be taken out. He was miraculously uninjured. His first thought was for Mr. Catesby, and he struggled to the sleeping-car, which he found shattered. Most of the passengers had been got out dead or seriously injured. The end car was so crushed it would have been impossible to identify Mr. Catesby if MacDermott had not been there. He had secured his watch and other effects. It was necessary that the interment should not be delayed. MacDermott had arranged everything and would return to Craggan immediately after the funeral.

He came the next day, but could add nothing to what his letter had told them. Knight's Gladstone and dressing bags were carried to his room and locked away there. There was little else in the

house to show what had happened. The servants went about sadly, and Logan's face lost the pride and happiness it had worn for the birth of his son.

In Janice's room a faint laugh sounded sometimes, and Janice lay watching her baby with a happy heart. One day she told Logan she would like to show Knight the boy.

"He has already seen him."

"But he was not beautiful then. I want him to see him now. Ask him to come up."

"Janice, Knight is not here. He left us a fortnight ago."

Her face changed. "Without seeing me? He ought not to have gone without saying goodbye. You must ask him to come back. I want him to be here when the boy is christened."

"He is christened already, dear. I did n't tell you — I had it done quietly, fearing he might be delicate."

"But he is not delicate, Logan! A great big fellow, he looks two months old at least. Oh, I do want to show him to Knight. Write and ask him to come."

"I will see, Janice."

At last it was impossible to hide it from her; she would not be denied, Knight must be sent for, Finally Logan told her very tenderly. She said nothing, scarcely asked a question, only lay with a blank white face that frightened them all.

"It is I who have killed him," she said to herself over and over again. Her love had driven him away from Scaurlets to his death. If it had not been for her child she would have been glad to die too.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HE was on board the Seagull; where else had he ever been in such a small room? He touched the wall on one side; his hand, stretched out, touched the wall on the other. Yes, he must be on board the yacht. What a horrible dream he had had. He was very thirsty. He put up his hand to the shelf over his head, where the water bottle usually was, but he could not find the shelf.

He opened his eyes and the glimmer of a shaded light was in the room; there was a chair, a table stood beside the bed — nothing else. It was certainly not his berth on the yacht.

The doctor came and told him he had been injured in a railway accident; he had been picked up on the line a little distance from the wrecked train. He showed him his watch, a gold lever with his name inside, Charles Bernard; the makers, Foster and Foster, Piccadilly.

He had certainly bought a gold lever lately from Foster and Foster, Piccadilly, but it was for — Whom was it for? Not Charles Bernard.

The doctor showed him his cardcase and the cards in it, "Mr. Charles Bernard." He spoke of his

voyage in the Seagull. "That's the boat in which you came over from Australia, you know. You told us about your life in the Bush."

"The Bush? Yes, there was something about the Bush." He caught at the passing flash of memory.

"And don't you remember the great sandstorm in which you were lost?"

"Yes — ten days — wandering — wandering — "

"To be sure. And there was a chap you buried — "

"There was no one else to — six feet in the sand — "

"There you are. You have talked enough. Go to sleep now. See you again later."

But was he Charles Bernard? And if not, who was he?

One day he dreamed that Janice stood by his bed. She was all in white, and her face was white. "Knight, wait for me. I can't go so fast. I am coming, Knight. Death has been kind — "

But when he woke he could not remember his dream. They brought him a newspaper when he asked for it. It was always a local paper, and it bored him to read the small news that it chronicled. One day a paragraph caught his eye.

"Righton and Sons have received from Sir Logan Catesby an order for a monument to be erected in memory of those killed in the recent railway accident, among whom was Mr. Knight Catesby, Sir Logan's

only brother. The monument is to be of Scotch granite and will no doubt be worthy of the firm to whom it has been entrusted."

Knight let the paper fall to the floor. He knew now. The events of the journey returned to him. His fellow traveller from the Bush had been Charles Bernard. He must have been killed, and they had buried him thinking he was Knight. He almost wished it had been true, it would have been happier for Janice if he had died.

He asked for the clothes in which he had been found, and they brought him his sleeping suit with his purse safely buttoned in the pocket. Some gold was in the purse, and in an inner secret fold two fifty pound notes that he had put there in case of need. There was the overcoat, too, in which they had found the watch and cardcase. These did not belong to him; he had taken the other man's coat in mistake for his.

The more he thought, the more he wished he had been Charles Bernard. It would be so difficult to go back to life, to take his place as Knight Catesby again. He wondered if they had proved his will. He had left everything to Janice. Slowly the conviction grew that he could not recall Knight Catesby from the grave in Crewe cemetery. He would remain dead and begin life again as Charles Bernard. He would accept the personality that had been forced on him. He would go out to Australia and make a place and friends for himself there.

It would be better for him — and for Janice. She would grow reconciled to her marriage and learn to love her husband.

The resolve quieted him. He could wait patiently for his discharge from the hospital.

They brought him the London papers, but now he always asked for the "Crewe Argus" and searched the column of local news. One day Logan's name was in another paragraph.

"Messrs. Righton & Sons are showing the designs for the monument which Sir Logan Catesby has ordered to be placed in the cemetery in memory of those killed in the railway accident. We regret to state that Lady Catesby, who was in delicate health at the time, has never got over the shock of Mr. Catesby's death. The gravest fears are entertained for her. Our readers will join with us in deep sympathy for Sir Logan Catesby in this doubly bitter affliction."

Knight remained stunned. It was impossible. Janice in danger of life, and because of grief for him? He had thought that she would have found consolation in her child. His heart sank in him.

When the day came for him to leave the hospital he had changed his plans. He would go to Craggan secretly and find out if it was true. He was so changed no one would recognise him. His future action would depend on Janice. If she was really dying he could not remain hidden.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE garden was a mist of moonlight flecked with dim masses of blossom that loaded the night with fragrance. White drifts of violets, waves of pale daffodils, soft snows of narcissus had flooded the shrubbery and lawn. The trees set soft shadows about the dreamy silence. It was a place for lovers' meeting. But it was deserted by all save the grim towers that frowned down upon its loveliness.

The house had been asleep for hours, but Janice could not sleep. The terrible restlessness was on her again. Every nerve was vivid with expectation. Something was going to happen to her. Was it death? She sat up in bed and listened. There was no sound but the regular breathing of the nurse in the next room. There was no sound outside. The night was still. No, it could not be death. When her soul went out into the void it would go among the whirling winds, she would be driven by the storm out and up and up until her breath was lost in the great Breath from whence she had come.

She could not die on a night so still. They thought she was dying, but she knew she was not.

Even though her body had failed so that all the strength had gone from her, her soul was quick with life. She had not loosed her hold on earth; her baby's hands were in hers. She had looked on death and turned her face from him, and turned towards life.

Spring was in the land, the stir of the earth's awaking. The same stir was in her, a quickening from death to life. Why did they think she was dying? She knew they thought so by the hushed tenderness that softened the days for her, by Heriot's careful courage, by Logan's changed manner. There was no tyranny now; nothing but tenderness and love, obedience to her least whim. Lying back on her pillows, with her baby beside her, there was nothing to wish for, nothing to rouse her. It would have been better if he had opposed her. The turning of each day's smoothly oiled wheels dulled all her senses to a dangerous lethargy.

But now she was restless. She wanted to be out of bed. She had been so long in bed — weeks and months. She wanted to be in the garden, to see spring smiling at her children. If it had been day she would have called her nurse and made her dress her and take her out into the open. She had seen the moon climb over her windows long ago. It was at the full, and the garden would be bright with it, the sea too. It was so long since she had seen the sea. She would like to look at it in the

moonlight. She slipped from bed, searching for her wrapper and shoes, laughing softly to find that she could stand and walk alone. Absurd to say that she was dying. She laughed again; then she began to tremble. It was only excitement; the fresh air would revive her. She had scarcely strength to open the window. She slipped down beside it and leaned her head on the ledge until life came back. She had kneeled like that at the same window the night she came to Scaurlets. Her heart had been strong to suffer then; now she was so weak she had no great pain, though Knight was dead. She had no great pain, though they said she was going to die too, and going to leave her baby. She had done with pain it seemed. It would not hurt her now to live that night again, to wrestle with love and life through the dark hours and find in the morning that she had not been alone. Ah, that had been cruel, to think that Knight had watched with her and to find that it had been Logan. How wan his face had looked against the evergreens — just there under the windows — she could see it again.

She leaned forward — surely, surely! — could she be dreaming? The face was there still, wan against the evergreens. She leaned out into the dark and a great trembling shook her. It was Knight, come back from the dead to call her. If she could go to him! She must go to him. But this was not like dying. The blood was moving in her veins,

her lethargy had passed; she felt strong enough to go alone into the garden, to follow Knight anywhere. Then she remembered, and despair took hold of her. Fool! fool! She had thought it was Knight before, and it had been Logan. It was Logan again, tempted out by the beauty of the night. He was looking up at her window, wondering if she was sleeping. She was glad the window was in the shadow, so that he could not see her there. She drew herself behind the curtain and gazed down. It must be Logan; and yet Logan had never looked so pale and strained and strange. There was something weird about the still face staring motionless at her window. It called to her as Logan had never called to her. She could not lift her eyes from it. It seemed to be calling her, compelling her.

She moved slowly backward from the window. "Wait; yes, I am coming," she called, and was startled to hear no sound of any voice. "It must be that I am dead and am going to Knight," she told herself.

Her feet were strong to bear her. She seemed to be flying. The room was quite light. She moved noiselessly by the open door of the nurse's room, swiftly by the tables and chairs, through the other door into the corridor. Here it was light too.

She sped along very quickly, past the nursery, past Logan's room, past Heriot's, downstairs into

the hall. The bolts of the great door moved easily, for her hand was strong. She flew on swiftly down the steps.

Yes, she must be dead. She was not weak any more.

How lovely the garden was in the moonlight! But she could not stop to notice the flowers. Knight was in the shrubbery calling her.

She seemed to fly still, not touching ground, along the path, between the close yew hedges — She was so afraid he would not wait for her. Now she was near the shrubbery. Yes, there he was, still looking up at her window.

She gave a little laugh, stretched out her hands, and flying still, came beside him.

"I have come, Knight, I have come!"

She saw him turn; she saw his face.

"Janice! Oh my God!"

Her arms found him. She felt his arms about her, steadying her, and for a minute they stood!

Then her eyes opened; she threw back her head and stared blindly into his ghastly face. A scream broke from her, and another and another, sending shrill echoes about the silence. Then came a quiet more shrill than her cries. He heard windows thrown open, and voices — Heriot's and Logan's.

"Come down," he called, "quick! quick! for God's sake! Janice is here. She has fainted!"

CHAPTER XXX

"GOING away again? Going to leave us after coming to us from the grave? My dear fellow, it's not to be thought of!"

Logan laid his hand on Knight's arm and looked at him very affectionately. "No, no, my boy; you have brought us life, and you must stay and share it with us. I owe Janice to you. If you had not been in the garden that night she would certainly have killed herself."

"Had she never walked in her sleep before?" Knight asked.

"Never. For weeks she has been in a kind of trance, lying still, noticing nothing. The shock of finding you alive has saved her, swung her back to life. It was terrible for us all when the news came, and we thought you were dead."

"I thought no one would miss me," said Knight.

"Miss you! It changed the world for us all. Even Heriot, cold and still and patient as she is, could n't hide her suffering. Now you must stay and let the women nurse back your strength. When I see you I have to assure myself that I am not looking at a ghost."

"I 'm thinking of a sea voyage," said Knight; "or Janice might lend me the yacht."

"Impossible!" said Logan sharply; "the very suggestion would set her clamouring for the sea; it 's a craze with her. She 'd certainly want to go, and I 'm such a wretched sailor I hate the thought of it."

Logan had not noticed Knight's absence from the morning-room, where Janice spent most of her time. His rare visits to her were made only when Logan was there. She was getting well fast now. Logan reflected that it would be a capital arrangement if Knight would stay and amuse Janice, and leave Heriot free to read with him in the library.

One morning when the brothers were in the morning-room together Logan found his opportunity.

"Heriot, can you spare me half an hour while Knight stays with Janice? He has not heard her on the perfections of the baby. They can talk while you and I read."

Knight made a movement of dissent and checked it. He would find himself alone with Janice some time or other, as well to-day as to-morrow. He could trust himself and he could trust her.

But when the door closed on Logan and Heriot it was difficult to break the silence. Both were conscious that death had drawn them closer to each other than life. Knight knew that sorrow for him had brought her near the grave; she knew that for her sake he had remained dead to them.

They looked at each other fearfully, and each grew pale. The past beat like a hammer on their consciousness.

Knight found a chair, cursing the physical weakness that slackened will and nerve. Even his limbs were trembling. He withdrew his eyes from hers. His weakness passed. She was his brother's wife; the mother of his brother's child.

"Shall I read to you, Janice? Would you care for me to read to you?"

"What will you read?" Her voice was changed too.

"Anything. I don't know — anything."

He turned over the books on the table beside him and took up the Dante that Logan had left there, turning the pages with slow, trembling fingers.

"Here's the 'Divina Commedia.' Do you care for any special part?" He could look at her again, and he forced himself to make his glance casual.

"Ah yes!" She raised herself on her elbows and snatched eagerly at the suggestion that saved her from the torturing silence. "There's that part about the souls in the wind. Will you read that?"

Knight gazed at her, wondering that she should choose that passage. "I don't think — I am not sure that I could find it," he said.

"Oh yes; it's in the Inferno, Canto V. Give me the book. I'll find it at once."

Frowning and reluctant, he handed her the book, and she rapidly turned the pages.

A New Paolo and Francesca

"Here it is — in the story of Paolo and Francesca. How could you forget?" She leaned back; her eyes were bright and eager; every trace of the moment's emotion was gone from her.

Knight took the book and unwillingly began to read where she pointed: —

> "I reached a place in which all light was silent,
> Which bellowed as the sea doth in a tempest
> When it is fought by Wind from hostile quarters.
> The infernal hurricane that never pauseth
> Sweepeth away the spirits with its fury,
> And whirling them, and buffeting doth plague them.

"Is n't it rather gruesome?" he asked, not looking up. "Let me see if I can't find something else."

"No, no! it 's magnificent. Go on please."

> "And as their pinions bear along the starlings
> In chilly weather, in a broad full squadron,
> So doth that storm-gust bear the evil spirits.
> Now here, now there, now down, now up it leadeth,
> No hope whatever have they got to cheer them."

He lifted his eyes from the page.

"Really, Janice, it 's too depressing. You must choose another passage."

"Can't you see them?" she cried, in a low, thrilling voice, raising herself and looking beyond and beyond him. "The souls in the wind, tossing, tossing for ever; now here, now there, now down, now up! I can see them like scudding clouds, white and tattered, sweeping in the wild wind. It

would n't be hell for me, that flight in the wind. Look! This is how I see them."

She slid from the couch to the floor, took off her fleecy scarf and held it high, both arms outstretched, over her head. The skirts of her gown, all a mist of snowy softness, floated round her like a cloud.

"What are you going to do, Janice?"

"Hush! Wait! I 'm a bird in the wind."

She stood a minute, her head bent forward, her lips parted, her gaze fixed. Then, still holding the white scarf high, she began to move with soft, rhythmic cadence.

The sweep of her garments was the sweep of the wind; the light moving of the scarf was the spread of white wings. Her face grew rarer and finer, till it was no longer flesh but spirit, shining and unearthly.

She seemed to be weaving a spell round Knight watching her, a spell of whirling winds. He grew dizzy with the silent white circling. He was no longer a man but a spirit swept by the wind into places in which all light was silent.

He and Janice were souls being carried by the wind where it would; now here, now there, now down, now up. They were together, for all eternity together, sweeping onward. No, it would not be hell for him, that flight in the wind. His breath shook in him. He was being strangled. She was weaving a spell round him. He was in the mesh

of the web. He could not free himself. Her hand caught his again into the whirling spaces, where he was once more spirit claiming the spirit that was his. The room spun round him.

Her breath on his face, the warmth of her close to him revived him. He came to himself with a violent reaction against the physical weakness that overpowered him.

"Stop," he said hoarsely. "Stop, Janice."

The trembling that shook him shook her too. His eyes tried to escape from her. They flew to the page and he began to read, wildly and incoherently, not knowing what he read, only desperate to escape that mesh of silence.

> "We two one day were reading for a pastime
> Of Lancelot — the way in which love grasped him.
> We were alone and all without suspicion.
> Then more than once that reading made us lower
> Our eyes, and made our faces change their colour."

He started to his feet and dropped the book.

"Oh my God, Janice, don't you see — it's the same story."

His tortured face entreated her. A little vague smile played round her mouth, while her eyes darkened to the pain she scorned.

"What are you afraid of?" she asked, lifting her head proudly.

Her voice faltered; the pride on her face died. She turned on him eyes that were all pain now and

terror, and held out her hands with a child's pitiful appeal.

"It is the same story," she whispered, and her face was like death. With a groan Knight fell back from that white anguish that besought him, and a cloud was over his eyes.

She seemed to be fading away from him. She was floating away. The wind was bearing her away. The room was whirling in the whirl of the wind. She was falling through wide spaces, away from him.

His arms caught her back. "Janice, I can't let you go!" He kissed her on the mouth, and the trembling that shook her made the room swing round him.

He stumbled with her to the sofa, laid her back on the cushions, and stood with stricken eyes looking down at her.

"My God! What have I done? What have I done?"

"Life and love," she sobbed; "they are too strong. We can't fight them."

"We have to fight them," he said harshly.

He moved backward and gazed at her. His face grew strong as he gazed, and his will came back to him. His love for her made him strong for them both.

"Because of the strength of love, and the weakness of love, we must fight."

"I can't! I can't! There is no strength in me." She covered her face with her hands.

"There is no strength in me," he said bitterly. "I must go away, before I forget my manhood — my loyalty to Logan."

She took away her hands from her face and looked at him with eyes that it killed him to see.

"Yes," she whispered; "you must go. Love is stronger than life, or death. You must go — but — but — you leave me — to Logan."

"God help you, Janice. He is your husband. He is the father of your child."

"The father of my child?" she said miserably. "No, not even that. Ah, you don't know how I hoped and prayed that my child might be like you — for the sake of your goodness! He is my little Knight — your boy, not Logan's. Look at that miniature and see if he is not exactly like you."

She pointed to the miniature on the screen, and Knight saw her face change from misery to a cold disdain. He followed her glance to the screen, and to Logan who stepped out from beyond it.

"Well, Knight?" he said, picking up the Dante from the floor, "is this the way you and Janice study the 'Divina Commedia'?"

CHAPTER XXXI

JANICE must go. Logan had taken pains to be just, dispassionately weighing the evidence of her innocence against the evidence of her guilt. He wanted to prove her innocent. He could not tolerate the thought that she was guilty; but the evidence was against her.

He weighed it again and point by point: her coldness to him at Edinburgh; her loss of spirits that Knight's coming had immediately restored; the child's birth eight months after their marriage; its likeness to Knight; her own words, "He is your boy, not Logan's." He remembered her broken-hearted grief at Knight's supposed death, her dying condition that did not prevent the midnight meeting in the garden, her quick recovery; and his heart was like lead, for he had no room for doubt. As for Knight, a lifetime of loyalty could not cover the damning evidence of his pretended death, the will made in favour of Janice, his presence with her in the garden. There was no room for doubt. He would sweep his life of them both.

Janice had borne his charge against her with proud consciousness of her innocence of the graver count. She had made ready to leave Scaurlets, and

not a pang was in her heart at the thought of leaving her husband. With Heriot and the boy she would live very happily at the villa.

Until that day Knight had been so completely out of her life that even now he did not enter into her scheme for the future. No thought of love between them soiled her mind. Her one thought was that she would have her baby and Heriot. Ah, life would blossom again on the Tuscan hillside. She would be like the peasant mothers who sat in the sun all day playing with their babies. Miss Black, still toying with matrimony, would be there to divert her.

And then had come Logan's decision; she must leave her child.

Now it was over. Hope and despair were dead in her heart. Nothing was there but bitterness against Logan. She was ready dressed, waiting for the carriage that was to take her and Heriot away from Scaurlets.

Then she thought of the boy in the loveless and forsaken house, and her heart cried out with a great cry. She saw the little face puckered up with dismay at Logan's frown. She saw the little face smiling into hard, unresponsive eyes. She saw the little life blighted for the want of tender motherliness.

She swung round in her restless walking up and down the room and laid her hand roughly on Heriot's arms.

"Heriot, you can't come with me. You have to stay here. You must stay that my baby may have some one to love him. Think of him with no one, no one. You love him now. You will stay and love him when I am not here."

Heriot shrank under the violent touch and words.

"Ah no, Janice," she cried. "You must n't ask me. I can never stay."

Her voice failed. Then her figure straightened. Standing at full height she met Janice's eyes, a shining pride in her own.

"I can't stay here because I love Logan," she said simply.

Janice fell back before her, but her eyes did not leave Heriot's proud, pale smile.

At last words came to her. "You love him, Heriot," she whispered; "yet you let me marry him?"

"Yes," said Heriot, "I let you marry him because I loved him. There is no greater love than that, — that a woman give up her love."

"How ironic life is!" Janice said, in the same still whisper. She shook her head, as if shaking off some cloaking thing that kept her from seeing rightly. Then she fixed her eyes, suddenly stern, on Heriot.

"The irony of it! The bitter irony of it! I owe my misery to you who love me — to you, and Knight, and Daddy. I owe it to my wish to do right. If I had followed my own way, if I had let my heart guide me, I would never have lived to

curse love and right as I curse them now. I curse the love that has filled my heart with hate. I curse right that heaps wrong on my innocent baby."

"Don't, don't, Janice! Some day you will understand."

"I understand now," said Janice. "There is something higher than man's code of right, — the law written by nature itself on our hearts. But man teaches us to distrust our high instincts." Her face grew hard. "We are only birds in the wind. We find death when we fight the wind."

Heriot remembered her prayer of long ago, — "O God, help me not to fight against Thy great wind." Was the wind of God that irresponsible nature of Janice's that, left alone, would have saved them from the ruin of this hour? Who could say? She was dumb before the mystery of the nature whose feet are in the dust and whose head is among the stars.

But Janice's words smote her conscience. She had sacrificed her to Logan, and she had ruined not only Janice's life, but Logan's and Knight's and her own. The love that she confessed so proudly had been a blight on them all.

The triumph died out of her face and a humbled misery withered her figure. She held out her hands to Janice, but Janice's eyes arraigned her and refused to be appeased.

"Janice," Heriot moaned, "I would give my soul to undo it now."

"Poor Heriot," Janice said, "it is hard for you to learn so soon the awful irrevocableness of one's actions."

The words were sharp with a fine, personal pain. Heriot saw in them the nails that were being driven into the coffin of Janice's youth. She remembered the girl with her magnificent young possibilities, the great sweep of her nature, her wonderful vigour. She remembered such details as the free, strong swing of her limbs, the gesture with her arms that was like the flight of a bird, her radiant mouth, her clouded eyes. She remembered the splendid Janice of the mountain winds, the high-hearted Janice of the stormy seas; and nothing of the Janice she remembered was in the woman before her. "What can I do, what can I do?" she sobbed.

"You can stay and save my baby," Janice answered.

Heriot shrank from the stroke of the unyielding voice that was like a whip compelling her will, and Janice went on pitilessly: —

"If by staying you are tortured by the sight of the man you love and can never marry, you will only feel the torture with which you have tortured me. If by staying you learn the cruelty and bitterness of life, it is a lesson you have taught me. Yesterday, perhaps, I should not have asked you to do so much; but to-day you have shown me how to sacrifice the weak to the strong."

Heriot lifted her face and her lips moved; but she saw no relenting in Janice. She could not break away from the urgency of her will. She would have to remain at Scaurlets to atone to Logan's child for the wrong his father had done him, to atone to Janice for the wrong she had done her.

"Janice," she said huskily, "I am weaker than you think. I don't even understand how weak a woman is when she loves."

"Your love was not too weak to sacrifice me," said Janice. "It will be strong enough to save my baby. Think what a fate! To be brought up by servants under the harshness of a Logan, under the resentfulness of a man who will not believe that the child is his!"

Heriot could not speak for a moment; then the words came halting, laden with their burden of shame.

"Janice, think. If I stay here, I — in any case — sacrifice my good name."

Janice looked at her with callous eyes. "Does that matter?" she asked wearily. "It seems to matter so little what people think. The thing that matters is what we do and feel."

Heriot went from her and stood motionless before the window. The sun, streaming in, made her eyes smart and showed her something strained and passionate in the flashing summer outside, in the glimpse of gold on the roof of the chapel where

the dead lay, in the sound of the wind in the pines, in the restless flicker of light on the paths.

The ground was strewn with the petals of the rose that had been yesterday's glory. It was the glamour of the year that, having blossomed, was waning to autumn and to sunless winter. She heard Lady Elizabeth's thin, high voice in the wind among the pines.

"What! You are not to have a springtime — no violets, no daffodils, no golden showers, no lad's love, nothing but bare branches?"

The answer was here. Love had given and love had taken away, and in the giving and the taking was the life of her soul. Her face set in fine lines of renunciation and purpose. She turned very quietly back to Janice.

"I 'll stay," she said.

There was a knock at the door, and Knight came in.

"The carriage is here, Janice. I have come to bid you and Heriot goodbye."

"Goodbye," she said, and gave him her hand with unassumed indifference. It mattered so little whom she left, now that she was leaving her baby.

"If I can help you at any time," Knight began, his voice husky in spite of his will to control it.

"No one can help me any more," she answered.

He turned to Heriot, unable to look at Janice without betraying his own emotion. "You will let me know how you arrive? If you break down on

the way — or Janice — I beg you to send for me. I am leaving the house now, but a wire to my club will find me." He held out a card to her.

"I am not going with Janice," Heriot said. "I am staying here to be little Knight's — " She hesitated, then finished, "nurse."

"And Janice?" he cried sharply. "Who is going with her? It's impossible that she should go alone. Some one must see her safe to Florence."

"I have my maid," said Janice; "and it does n't matter if I never get to Florence at all."

Knight studied her hopeless eyes, her strained face, and his own grew fixed, like a waxen mask.

"You are not fit to travel alone, Janice," he said gently. "Logan must go with you."

"I will never go with Logan," she said coldly, turning away.

"Then I must take you, Janice."

His voice entreated her to spare him this ordeal, but she only turned back to him wearily.

"What does it matter whether you go or not? Does it matter to a dead woman who takes her to the grave?"

He hesitated a moment, but her manner decided him. In that reckless mood she was capable of any harm to herself. He rang the bell, gave a quick order to the servant who answered it, and when Janice came down, he stood ready in the hall. There was no one else to see her go. Heriot had remained upstairs, Saunders and the luggage had

already gone. The servants at the windows were guessing at the reason for their mistress's sudden departure, but no one guessed the truth.

Without a glance behind, still and pale and cold, Janice stepped into the carriage and Knight followed. They had almost started when Logan appeared on the steps and signed to the coachman to stop. At the last moment he had bethought himself of the wisdom of avoiding remark by being present at his wife's departure.

He hurried down the steps to the carriage window. He saw with Janice not Heriot but Knight, and the words he would have said failed on his lips. His face twitched, but in an instant he mastered his voice.

"So Janice will have you as a courier, Knight? I confess I had not thought it likely."

"I shall not leave her till she is safe with Miss Black at Florence," said Knight, meeting his look gravely. "It never dawned on me that you would let her go, ill as she is, with only her maid to arrange her journey."

"No doubt the present arrangement is a pleasanter one for you both," said Logan, with frigid eyes on Janice's disdainful face. "Bon voyage, then!"

He lifted his hat. "Drive on," he called to the coachman.

He stood with livid, arrested face gazing after them, until he became aware of watching heads at

the window. Then he pulled himself together and went to speak to old Dennis.

He glanced at his master and saw on his face the feeling that Logan thought he was hiding.

" You have no need to worry about her ladyship, Sir Logan," he said sympathetically. " She 'll come to no harm as long as she has Mr. Knight to take care of her. She could n't be safer with you than she 'll be with him."

" Possibly you are right," said Logan courteously.

CHAPTER XXXII

A POIGNANT loneliness held the great empty rooms, and for the first time Logan realised that Scaurlets was a sombre and cheerless dwelling. It had never struck him before that the old home could be anything but overflowing with life. Now he saw that it must have seemed dreary enough to Janice, fresh from the sunny days of Italy. No wonder she had drooped and pined through the winter. It did not need Knight's absence to account for her depression.

He wandered from room to room. The house was like one from which the dead had been taken. It did not seem possible that those haunting silences had been gay with Janice's laugh, with Knight's footsteps, with the rustle of Heriot's gown. The stillness was only disturbed by the voices of dead possibilities that sighed about the rooms like forlorn winds.

He went into the library, and the night of his home-coming was there, a stark, cold memory. He stood again at the door and saw the smoke-wreaths round the coffin, the flare of the torches, Janice in their midst coming towards him with her look of divine pity. He heard the chanting of the dirge,

and the sound was charged with omen. Then a chill ran through him, for the chanting gave place to the weird shrilling of a bagpipe.

"It 's the grey piper of Scaurlets," Logan exclaimed.

He dropped into a chair, shivering. "It 's the grey piper playing the death call of the Catesbys." He could not stop his shivering. He straightened himself and listened. The music was certainly in the room, or was it only the echo of the lykewake dirge? Even while he listened the thin wail of the pipes faded and lost itself in the hoarse chanting.

> "If ever thou gavest hosen or shoon,
> Every night and all,
> Sit thee down and put them on,
> And Christ receive thy saule."

He leaned his head on the table where Lady Elizabeth had smiled her crooked smile at death, and he wondered if he would have been so stern with Janice if he had known that the grey piper would play for him that night. It could be for no one else. Was he not the head of the house? He listened again, but there was no sound of the pipes, only the hoarse chanting of the dirge.

> "If ever thou gavest hosen or shoon,
> Sit thee down and put them on."

The words battered their way into his consciousness. If indeed the piper was playing for his death,

what hosen or shoon had he given that he could put on now? Try as he would he could not recall a single instance in which he had given anything to any creature as a free gift. He had exacted everything all his life, from mother and brother, from wife and friend and servant, and had given nothing in return. He had given no hosen, no shoon, and now his feet were bare on that rough road where he needs must follow the piper, if indeed it was the grey piper he had heard.

Then he laughed harshly, for a thin wail sounded unmistakably in the house, the crying of the child passing the library door. A pang of pity went through him. The child's voice reminded him of Janice. His haggard face grew more strained, but he steeled his heart against her. Was it not she who had made his home desolate?

Facing the future, he saw how full his life had been during these months, in spite of his mother's death, of his wife's coldness, in spite of Knight's absence. He had missed nothing of all that he had desired.

Nothing had been wanting to his happiness. And yet Janice had never loved him. She had never loved him, and he had not found it out. His life with her had satisfied him. But in her going she had taken everything from him, — wife, brother, friend.

The emptiness of the great silent house was terrible. He found himself straining his ears to hear

the wail of the pipes. Everything was quiet. It must have been the child's crying that he had heard. He forced his mind to face the thought of death. Well, better death than what life offered. Dishonoured, betrayed, deserted, what was there left to live for? But he would have given the whole of his life to know that Janice and Knight were innocent.

The afternoon had grown strangely dark; was it a mist before his eyes that set the room in shadow, so that everything about him was dim? The smoke of the torches seemed to fill the room, and through it he saw Janice coming to him with eyes of infinite pity. Then he saw that it was not Janice but Heriot.

He sprang up, and the horror of loneliness fell from him as if he had never known it.

"You have not gone, Heriot?" he said. "I thought you had gone."

"I have not gone," she answered. "I promised Janice to remain with the baby. But of course your consent is necessary."

"I was wondering how I could bear it," he said. "I did not know till now how much I owed to your companionship. If you remain it will take the bitterness from all that I am suffering."

"There is no idea of companionship," she said coldly. "I stay as one of the servants — as the child's nurse — not as your friend. There must be no mistake whatever in my position."

"Impossible, Heriot. I shall not consent to that. We must read and study together as usual. *You* one of the servants? You with your wealth, your position, your youth, to be a nurse-maid? How could you consent to such a thing?"

"I do it for love of Janice."

"She is not worth the sacrifice," he cried sharply. "You give up your life that a light creature may be free to —"

The look on Heriot's face checked him.

"A light creature?" she echoed. "Janice with her great, generous heart, her high instincts, her girl's years, and her woman's passion? Janice, who has the mind of a poet, and the nature of a storm-bird, a light creature? You can never have known her." She turned from him scornfully.

"I have seen in her nothing but a self-willed girl playing the wanton," he said sternly.

"Yes," she said, and the grave sadness of her assent thrust home its truth, "she was wanton when she sacrificed love and life out of pity for you. She was so noble she did not let me even suspect what she was giving up."

"She wronged me when she married me not loving me."

"Have you ever loved her?" Heriot asked. "Who loves trusts. If you had ever loved her you would have trusted her."

His eyes failed before her. He tried to say that he had loved Janice, but he could not force the false-

hood; for now he knew that it was not Janice he loved, but this white, passionless woman whose words arraigned him.

It was she who had made his life. It was she who had filled his days so that he had not seen that Janice could never satisfy him. With Heriot at Scaurlets Janice might go or stay; her presence or absence could not affect him so long as he had Heriot. It was Heriot he had loved from the first moment of meeting, and he knew it too late.

The shock tingled through him. He looked at her with eyes from which the scales had fallen, and his glance failed again before her cold eyes.

"True," he said sadly. "I never loved Janice. And now — I am bound to her. The divorce that would free me would drag her through the mud." His face grew gentler. "She is so young. It is not to be thought of — and for her father's sake — "

He stopped incoherently, then added, "We must accept the situation with all its bitterness and misery. Three lives ruined — "

"Janice is innocent," said Heriot; "she has never wronged you. It is you who have wronged her by want of trust."

She turned to leave him, but something in his silence touched her, and she turned again.

"It is settled, then, that I am to be little Knight's nurse? I have your consent to make the necessary arrangements?"

"Wait," he said hoarsely, "I have not thought.

If I could only be sure that you are right about Janice. Now that she has gone it seems less certain. But I shall be very grateful if you will stay. I myself, at least for the present, am leaving Scaurlets."

"I think that is best," she answered. The aloofness in her voice made him realise that no absence could set him further from her than he was at that moment. Suddenly her face changed from its quiet into white wrath.

"Is it by your orders that the bagpipes are playing to-day?"

"What do you mean? I don't know what you mean," he said quickly.

"They are playing the pipes. Listen, you will hear them."

She held up her hand, and in the shadowy silence the wail of the pipes swept fitfully about the room.

"It is the grey piper," Logan said in a strange voice. He threw back his head, listening. His face was like ivory against the dusk. "It is the grey piper. That is the death call of the Catesbys."

"The grey piper." Heriot's tones shook with the shaking that had come upon her. "He plays for the head of the house, and you are the head of the house. He is not playing — because — you — are — to — die?"

The horror in her words weighted them. They dropped like lead, plumbing the depths of her hidden love.

It could not be the death call of the Catesbys. No, no! Logan could not die. She was dreaming. Some one was playing the pipes in the garden.

They stepped together to the open window and looked out. The skies were sullen with clouds that made twilight on the terrace, overlooking the sea.

Grey against the twilight, the spectral piper was pacing the terrace. Logan saw the drones thrown over his left shoulder, the bag tucked under his arm, the blowpipe in his lips, the long bony fingers holding the chanter. The mincing feet made no sound on the terrace.

"Who is there?" Logan cried. His voice was shriller than the pipes.

"It's Dennis, Sir Logan," a voice under the window answered.

"No, no. Who is that playing the pipes?"

"No one, Sir Logan. It's the wind rising. It will be rough at sea to-night."

Heriot laughed a little glad laugh. Then the sound changed to a tense whisper, "But I saw him. It was the grey piper. I saw him. The head of the house is going to die."

CHAPTER XXXIII

JANICE leaned back wearily in the railway carriage. She was thinking of the time when she had taken the same journey through the same smiling land.

Her heart had not been dead then. It had sprung up in her, though she had married Logan and said goodbye to love. There was no life in it to-day, though she had left Logan, though Knight was with her, though she was going home to Italy.

She looked at Knight's strained and silent face, and his presence offered her no compensation for the loss of her baby. His love offered no healing for her bleeding heart. It was there to protect her, not to fill up the yearning emptiness that tortured her.

Knight had set an icy barrier round his love. Saunders, sitting prim and straight in her corner, was not needed to ward off personalities.

Janice had done with love; yet in the background of her consciousness she knew that one day her youth might rise up in her with a clamour for life and love and the joy of life. She had known too many reactions of emotion to trust this apathy of

despair. She was stunned now, but she might revive to find nature too strong for her.

She had heard of women who being denied love had satisfied themselves with passion. Who could tell if she would not sink to such degradation without her child, without Heriot, without Knight? Logan had taken from her all that held her to good. He had turned her face toward evil. She remembered that evil was not always ugly. The pink roses that crowned the faun with two faces on the villa terrace had clambered as thickly about the face of the devil as about that of the angel.

She had meant to look only on the face of the angel, but she was going back to Florence to look on the face of the devil. What was there to prevent her? Not Knight, who would be far away from her; not the memory of her father, who had betrayed her into Logan's hands; not the memory of her child. In that last lay her weakness. The yearning for her baby would make her clutch at anything that offered forgetfulness. She dreaded the sight of Giustina with her baby; how was she to see them and live defrauded of her motherhood? She dreaded the days of languor full of a charm that the girl Janice had found it hard to resist. The charm was in the voice of the Marchese Malvolino, in his smile, in his eyes, in the spell his mere presence had woven round her.

She contrasted his sugared deference with Logan's acrid tyranny, his passion with Knight's reticence.

She remembered the roses he had lavished on her till every memory of him was laden with delicious suggestion, and she was afraid; for she knew that the sweetness and softness that had charmed the girl might fascinate the woman.

She remembered his words, "Tell the Signorina one day she will receive me," and she heard in them a prophecy of her own undoing. Who was to save her from the nature that had ceased to fight against circumstance? She was a bird drifting on the wind, the wings of her will too feeble to beat against fate.

"Come to your own aid while yet you may," was stencilled in her room in the villa; but the day had gone by when she wished to come to her own aid. There was nothing in her to stop her on the easy descent to ruin.

The smiling stillness of the afternoon had no whip for lagging moralities; it counselled drifting. Why fight against nature and natural instincts?

She glanced across at Knight, and his face set a barred front to her need. She did not wish him to come down from his height of conduct; but if he had been a little nearer earth that her doubts of herself might have found sanctuary in his strength! She must come to her own aid. She could not affront love by a hint of self-betrayal.

She wondered at herself that her love for Knight was not strong enough to strangle the thought of Malvolino. And then she did not wonder; for the nature in her was a faun with two faces.

She told herself pitifully if the day had been charged with winter and stinging winds she would have been braced to resistance. But it was summer; and she was going back to the sensuousness of the Italian summer, to the languor of a land made for love, to the sweetness of roses hiding the face of the devil.

She would be at Florence in three days, while still the mood for drifting had possession of her. Who would save her? Not Miss Black, who admired the Marchese.

"Knight," she said shrilly, "speak to me. What are you thinking that you are so silent?"

He raised his head, and his eyes darkened as he saw her haggard face, the face of a hunted woman.

"I was thinking of your thoughts harping in the high boughs of the pines, Janice. I was remembering the yacht and our stormy days on board."

He saw her face wake. "The yacht! the yacht!" she cried. "Why did n't I think of it before? It would give me at least a fortnight — it might be my salvation."

She stood up with a gesture that seemed to shake from her some threatening, live thing.

"Saunders, we have the luggage with us — wraps and clothes?"

"Yes, my lady; in the van."

"Good." She turned again to Knight, her lips set. "The Seagull is docked at Greenock. I shall go home in her."

"Impossible. It will be days, weeks perhaps, before she can be got ready for sea."

"Not impossible at all!" She gave a laugh that was broken by tears. "She is ready for sea now. When you came back so ill I had her got ready to start at an hour's notice. I thought you might like a summer cruise. I thought Logan would let me go too. I need n't ask his consent now. We can start this evening."

"Oh, my lady!" Saunders shuddered.

"It will be glorious!" Janice said, the life in her voice conquering the hardness. "Ah! how glad I am I thought of it. I was dead, but now I am alive again!"

She looked about her with eyes that seemed to see heaven opening.

"Think of it, Knight!" she went on. "The sea! the sea again! And the winds, and the waves! They call to me. I hear voices. Ah, I know what killed me at Scaurlets; it was the hard earth under my feet. I was in a strange country. Now the sea calls me. I am going home! I am going home!"

Knight moved uneasily and tried to speak, but the wonder of her face kept him silent. It was soft and rosy again, tossed over with shifting lights. The smiling mouth, the eager expression, the young strength had returned in that single moment. It was the girl Janice again before him. Her impetuous mood had spirited away the outcast wife, the

haggard woman. He could not bear to recall them. He could not tell her at once that it was impossible. He might travel by train with her, but a fortnight's voyage was out of the question.

He knew the strength of his weakness, and he had learned the weakness of his strength. It had not borne the strain of that difficult moment which had broken down love's barriers. Other difficult moments would be before them, and now there was nothing to fence them but their own loyalty to good. Logan had driven them outside the gates and bars.

Knight looked at the woman he loved, and he dared not trust himself through the idle loneliness of the voyage with her.

"Janice," his voice was harsh with repressed emotion, "if you go by sea I shall not be able to go with you."

"Why not?"

He glanced at the maid, who was eagerly watching the discussion.

"You see, Janice, I can take you home by rail. By sea it is out of the question."

"As you please." She shrugged her shoulders. "I go home on the yacht."

She sat down, turned her face from him, and drummed on the glass of the window.

"Won't you change your mind?" he pleaded. "I should be so much easier about you if I left you safe at Florence."

"I don't know if I shall ever go to Florence.

I want the sea. I want to be in the wind. I must feel clean again. I seem to have come through foul places."

"I know, Janice; and the sea will be good for you. If only you had some friend with you."

She faced him suddenly.

"You are the only friend I want. Knight, come with me. It will be good for you too. If you are with me I shall forget the things that have hurt me. You will save me. I don't think I am asking too much. You will be a knight-errant, saving me from myself."

Her words made his brain spin. It was surely not Janice speaking. It was his mother's voice. He heard her last words. "Knight-errant, save Janice."

He groaned aloud, not knowing if the command was of God or the devil. The man in him urged him to let the obvious duty decide. His better self bared the temptation and showed him its naked ugliness.

"Janice, I would go if I could; but it is impossible."

Her face changed. By and by she spoke.

"After all, it is not you but the sea and the wind that I want. How strange it is, — when I think of going down to the sea I forget yesterday and to-day. I may never have lived these last months. They are less than a dream. Nothing is real but the voice of the sea calling me — calling me."

"I know. I have heard the sea calling, too; all my life it has called me."

She flashed round at him. "You have heard it, and you never told me? What a wonderful, wonderful bond between us!"

A beautiful light shone on her face. It died away and left her wan.

"How cruel life is," she whispered. "How cruel it has all been."

Neither spoke again till they reached Glasgow.

Knight went with her to Greenock to the docks. It was as Janice had said. The Seagull was ready for sea and could start that very evening. But the glass was falling rapidly, and the captain advised them to wait till the storm had passed.

Janice would not wait. She longed to be out in the storm. She saw Knight go, and her face was unmoved.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE clouds gathered about the sunset, and long, low growls of thunder muttered warning. It would be wild that night on the sea; but the more threatening it looked the higher rose Janice's spirit. She welcomed the first gust of wind in the rigging with a triumphant laugh.

The thought of the voyage shone round her like a light, transforming her. If she remembered that she had left her child, that she had said goodbye to Knight, there was nothing to show it. She was gay and brisk, childishly happy hanging garlands of flowers about the yacht.

The unwilling Saunders looked on in despair, and the sailors wondered, but she only hurried their preparations.

The winds and the waves rose, and the sea was shrouded in storm. Even in the harbour the swell of the waves made itself felt, and a wash of waters and a noise of clanging chains spoke of tumult outside.

The anchor was almost weighed when Knight came on deck. He was breathless with the haste he had made to prevent Janice from setting out in the storm.

She only mocked at his fears; a mad recklessness possessed her. There was a strangeness in her manner that frightened him. She showed him the wreaths she had hung everywhere.

"It looks like a bridal barge," she cried. "I am going to my bridal with the sea."

"They are funeral wreaths," he said. "Janice, you don't know what you are doing. I can't let you go in this mood."

"What are you afraid of?" she asked him. "I am not afraid. Surely the bitterness of death is past."

Her words clutched at his heart.

"The bitterness of death!" he cried. "No, Janice, it is the bitterness of life that is past. A new life is before you."

"Yes, I know it. The winds and the waves will make my life. Among them I shall lose my pain. Think, Knight! If I could spread wings on the wind — free for ever! That would be my true bridal."

A smile dawned on her face and spread to her eyes, that grew wide with a radiant gladness.

Knight remembered that he had never seen her eyes smile before. She had always been Janice of the laugh and the sad eyes, and the change gave him a shivering sense of doom.

He laid his hand roughly on her arm. "Janice, what are you thinking of?" he asked hoarsely. "What does all this mean?"

She turned her face up to him, eyes and mouth smiling.

"I think I am going from the great deep to the great deep, like the wounded bird. There is no one to save me. Do you remember, you risked your life for the bird?"

"Oh my God!" he groaned; "if it were only life I risked."

Cold drops of agony broke out on his forehead, for high above the rising wind he heard his mother's voice. "Knight-errant, save Janice."

A bell ringing warned him that the yacht was waiting to start. With a gesture of despair he turned and went to speak to the captain. But louder than the captain's voice he heard his mother speaking: —

"Save Janice — save Janice."

Then, suddenly calm, he came back.

"Janice, I am going with you. You are in danger. I can't leave you to face it alone."

"Danger?" she smiled, "there is no danger. Storm and tempest are my friends calling me. They call you, too. You said the sea called you. Don't you hear it calling?"

"How do I know what voice it is that calls me?" he said sadly. "Is it God? But His voice was not in the tempest. Is it fate? There is a wind of fate, and we are birds swept resistlessly on. And some wings are strong to conquer the storm, and some the storm conquers. God knows, Janice, if our wings

are strong enough to bear us up in the day of His great wind."

"I am not afraid!" her tones sang like a silver trumpet. "Long ago I dedicated love to the storm. I dedicate life to it now. I dedicate death to it. But it would not be death, a flight in the wind."

She stood in the dusk of the storm with head raised, a strange white light on her face, her lips smiling to match the smile in her eyes. Then she began to move in a soft, rhythmic measure. The sweep of her garments was the sweep of the wind. The light, floating movement of the white scarf she wore was the flight of white wings.

Her face grew rarer and finer, till it was no longer flesh but spirit shining in an unearthly radiance. She wove a spell round Knight, a spell of whirling wings. He grew dizzy as he watched her silent white circling. He was no longer a man, but a spirit swept by the wind into places "in which all light was silent."

He and Janice were birds being carried by the wind where it would; now down, now up, now here, now there. They were together — for all eternity together — sweeping onward in the wind. No, it would not be death, that flight in the wind. His breath shook in him. He swayed where he stood, and clutched at a rail to save himself from falling.

Then he came to himself. They were out of the

quieter waters, and the Seagull was springing like a live thing in the waves.

The wind shrieked round the yacht and roared among the rigging, and the darkness folded about its lonely lights. They were near the land, but in the black night there was nothing seen about them but sea and storm.

Towards midnight Knight came on deck again, and now he could only keep his footing by holding to the ropes. The storm was tonic and bracing; it knitted his nerves. He was sure of himself again. His love could bear any test.

He wondered if Janice were sleeping through all this passion of wind and wave. How dark it was; no moon, no stars, only now and then the jagged torch of the lightning on the clouds. Under the shriek of the wind was the crash of the waves against the boat, the sharper crash of the thunder. The lightning sprang out and showed him every spar of the rigging; and up there, swinging high, something white. One of Janice's garlands? No, but — God in Heaven, Janice herself!

Climbing, baffled, breathless, he reached her at last, and they swayed together on the swinging spar. His arm round her was all that held her on the swinging perch.

"Janice! It is death to be here. Oh my God! don't you see it is death?"

"It is life, life!" she cried joyfully; "life and more life!"

The Seagull lurched. Instinctively she flung her arms about him. "Life! death! love!" she cried with a ringing triumph. "I claim them all."

The lightning forked across her face and showed it shining with a whiteness that seemed to flash.

"Janice, Janice, love is death!"

The wild rush of the wind tore at them where they stood. Her hold of him tightened, and he drew her close.

"Love is life!" she laughed.

The Seagull dipped into the trough of the sea and rose shivering and heeled over towards the black depths.

Janice threw her head back with a glad cry.

"Knight! Knight! Death is love!"

He felt the spar splinter under their feet. His arm, wrenched from the mast, closed round her, and they clung together in night and darkness.

Across the spaces of storm-tortured waters came a sound like the cry of birds whirled away in the wind.

THE END

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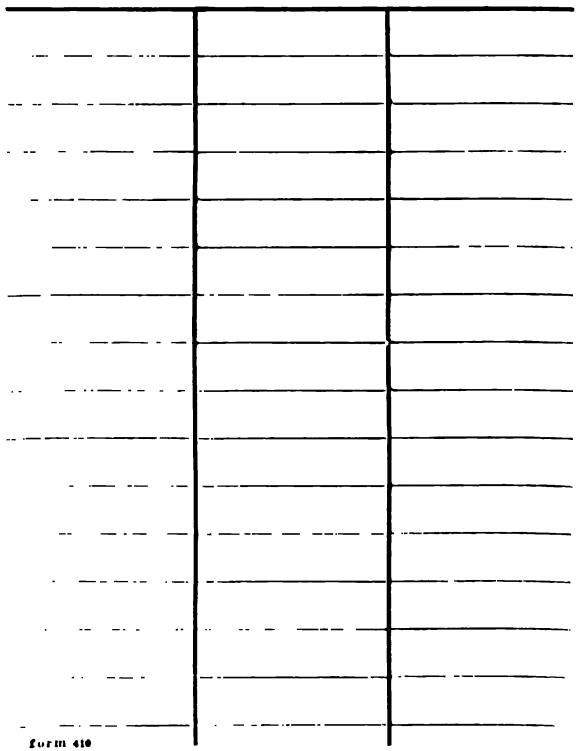
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